

12. J. K.
618

SEVERAL
SERMONS,

Chiefly upon
Practical Subjects,

Many of which were preached before
Her Present MAJESTY,
WHEN
PRINCESS of WALES

By Her Chaplain in ORDINARY,
The late REVEREND
NICOLAS BRADY, D. D.
Rector of CLAPHAM, and Minister of
RICHMOND in Surrey.

*Now first published from the Author's
Manuscripts.* 3 Lc

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3

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SERMONS

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Practical Subjects



PRINCIPLES OF MORALS

By Her Chaplain in Ordinary

The late Reverend

NICHOLAS BRAND, D.D.

Regent of CLAREHAM, and Master of

RICHMOND in SWITZERLAND

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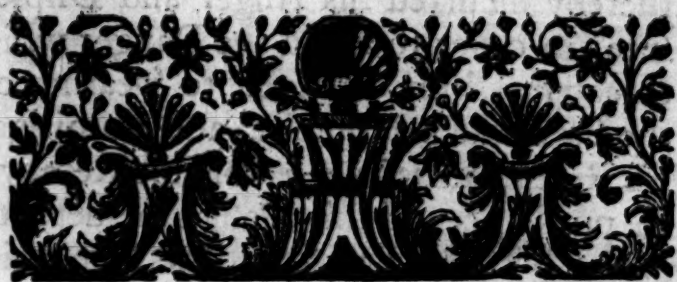
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SERMON XXIX.

God's Presence in Assemblies
a Motive to frequent
Attendance.

GEN. xxviii. Part of 16th Verse.

Surely the Lord is in this Place.

THESE Words were spoken by Serm.
the Patriarch *Jacob*, as the XXIX.
Result of his Reflections upon
a most comfortable Vision,
vouchsafed to him in his Journey towards
Padan-Aram; for he, as we are told in
the foregoing Chapter, having defrauded
his elder Brother of the Blessing, and
B there-

Vol.III. thereby incurred his Anger and Displeasure, in order to avoid the Danger which threatened him, resolved to weather out the Storm at a Distance, and to mitigate his Resentments by a seasonable Removal. In pursuance of this Design he departed privately from *Beerseba*, the Habitation of his ancient Father *Isaac*, and travelled on towards *Haran*, the Dwelling-place of *Laban* his Mother's Brother. In his Way thither *he lighted*; saith the Text, *upon a certain Place, and tarried there all Night, because the Sun was set; and he took of the Stones of that Place, and put them for his Pillows, and lay down in that Place to sleep.* A mean Accommodation this was, for the Grandson of *Abraham*, the Heir of Promises, and the Son of Blessing! But God, who is able to make any Condition not only easy, but delightful, supplied with his own Presence all Conveniencies that were wanting. Though his Bed was hard and rugged, yet soft and quiet was his Repose; and though his Head was laid so very uneasily, yet was his Fancy agreeably employed, in the Contemplation of a most beautiful Prospect. *And he dreamed*, saith the Text, *and behold a Ladder set upon the Earth, and the Top of it reached to Heaven; and behold the Angels of God ascending and descending*

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scending on it; and behold, the Lord stood above it! An Entertainment than which nothing can be imagined more ravishing or delightful; and by which his sorry Couch of Earth and Stones was made preferable to the Down and Tissue of Princes! And therefore we find him proportionably affected with it upon his awaking; he is surprized and astonished at the Beauty of his Dream, and immediately breaketh forth with Joy and Admiration, into a rapturous Acknowledgment of the divine Presence; *Surely, saith he, the Lord is in this Place!* I shall not any farther pursue the History, or trace the holy Patriarch through any other Circumstances; but shall only apply this Expression of his, concerning his *Beth-el, his House of God* (as himself stileth it) to all the Houses of God in the Land; and affirm of them, as he did of his, that God is eminently present in them; and indeed, if we consider seriously, that in every Assembly of the Faithful, in every Place consecrated to God's immediate Service, the holy Angels, those ministering Spirits, are continually descending thither, and ascending from thence, to look into, and join with us in our Devotions, and to carry up and present them before the Throne of God; if we will

Vol.III. but reflect, that God standeth above upon all such Occasions, and affordeth his Presence to us in a more extraordinary Manner; we may justly look upon these Places, which so fully enjoy all parallel Advantages, as so many Copies and Transcripts of the other; and may truly say of them, as the Patriarch did of that, *Surely the Lord is in this Place!*

IN my following Discourse upon which Words, I beg leave to insist upon these two Particulars:

I. I SHALL consider how, and in what Manner, God may be said *to be present in this Place.*

II. I SHALL enquire, what Effects should be wrought upon us, by a Consideration of this Nature.

I. THEN, I shall consider how, and in what Manner, God may be said *to be present in this Place!*

GOD, that made the World, and all Things therein, seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, saith the Apostle; *the Heaven of Heavens is not able to contain him*, and how then shall he be confined within such narrow Limits! We can assign no Place wherein he is not pre-

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present; nor any wherein he can be said so strictly to be, as to exclude him from all others. *If I climb up to Heaven, saith the Royal Psalmist, thou art there; If I go down into Hell, thou art there also:* He is that great Soul of the World which runneth through and animateth all Parts of the Universe: And therefore unless God be present amongst us, after a more eminent and peculiar Manner, to say, *The Lord is in this Place*, is no more than what may be affirmed in any other part of the whole Creation. There are therefore four Ways, by which God may be said *to be present in this Place*, after a more eminent and peculiar Manner.

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1. IN the Persons of his Ambassadors.
 2. IN the Distribution of his Ordinances.
 3. BY the Efficacy of his Holy Spirit.
- And,
4. BY the Influence and Exercise of his Goodness.

1. THEN, We may justly say, that *God is in this Place*, because he is present here after a peculiar Manner, in the Persons of his Ambassadors.

HOWEVER mean and contemptible in himself the Person may be that sustaineth such a Character, yet a Prince, we know, is supposed to be effectually

Vol.III. present, where-ever he is personated by his Representative; and thus is God also by such as are his Ministers: *We are, saith the Apostle, Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.* Here is an Account both of the Character of these Ambassadors, and of their Office; they are commissioned by God to treat with you in his Behalf; to lay before you the Advantages of closing with his Offers, and the manifold Dangers of a wilful Refusal; to sollicite you to enter into a firm Correspondence, a perpetual League of Affinity with him; to represent to you the Grandeur and Magnificence of their Prince, and the vast Obligations which lie upon you towards him; that so they may engage you to enter into his Interests, and to espouse his Cause with Heartiness and Constancy. He sendeth them in his Name to warn you of your Enemies, to lay open the Designs of your bosom Adversaries; that so you may break off all Commerce with them, and be freed from the Danger of their poisonous Insinuations. This is the Place wherein you give them publick Audience, and solemnly attend to the Proposals which they bring: Here it is that they exhort, in the Name of

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of God, who hath impowered them; Serm. XXIX.
here it is that they rebuke, by the Authority of him that hath deputed them: And though the meanest Condition, or greatest Discouragement, cannot take off from the Dignity of that Character, since *St. Paul* stileth himself *God's Ambassador in Bonds*; yet this is the Place where their Ambassy is acknowledged, and they exercise their Function with a becoming Solemnity: And therefore God is present here after an extraordinary Manner, in the Persons of his Representatives, however mean or unworthy they may be in themselves; and we may safely conclude from thence, that, *Surely the Lord is in this Place.*

2. WE may justly say, that *God is in this Place*, because he is present here in a peculiar Manner, by the Distribution of his Ordinances.

WHEREVER the Laws and Constitutions of a Prince are published and acknowledged to be obligatory, there is the Prince more particularly present, by Virtue of his Power and Authority: Their Orders and Decrees are those long Hands of Kings, by which they reach to all Parts of their Dominions; and are felt by such as are most distant, as if they were not only near, but present too.

Vol. III. Now this is the Place, where the Ordinances of God are most freely distributed, where his Will is made known, and Obedience to it exacted: This is the Place designed for the Promulgation of his Laws, that so the most stupid or most retired, may have no Plea of Ignorance to excuse them. Our very Meeting together is one Part of our Obedience; our offering up our Prayers and Thanksgivings is another, our Listening to the Word is a third; and in every one of these God is eminently present, because all of them are Parcels of his own Injunctions: And though it is most certain, that such of these Performances as may be done in private, will even there be well pleasing and acceptable to God; yet we have his positive Promise, that *where two or three are gathered together in his Name*, that is, at all Times and Places of publick Devotion, *he will be in the Midst of them*; he will afford them his Presence more fully and effectually. And therefore God is present with us here, after a more than ordinary Manner, in the Distribution of his Ordinances; and we may safely conclude from thence, that, *Surely the Lord is in this Place.*

3. WE may justly say, that *God is in this Place*; because he is present here in

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a peculiar Manner, by the Efficacy of his *Sermon*
Holy Spirit. *XXIX.*

THE Spirit of God is God himself; and every Influence and Assistance of that, is a Ray and Emanation of the divine Nature; they are so many Beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and consequently denote him more particularly present. The Zeal and Fervency with which our Prayers are actuated; the Joy and Gratitude with which our Praises are enlivened; the Simplicity and Attention with which the Word is received; the due Preparedness of the Soil, and the Fruitfulness of the Seed; every good Motion and Disposition, are all owing to the Operations of this Holy Spirit, *from whom cometh every good and perfect Gift.* Were not God present here by the Efficacy of his Spirit, how cold and lifeless would our Devotions be! How dead and insignificant our Addresses! How dull and sluggish our Performances! How little should we be affected with what we say, or what we hear? How should we trifle away the Time of Prayers, and probably sleep out that of the Sermon? If therefore any of us find such a Warmth of Affection and Seriousness of Attention, as are suitable to the great Duties about which we are employed;

Vol. III. ed; if we find our Minds disengaged from wandering after Vanities, and settled upon the Exercises of Piety and Religion; we must acknowledge this to be the Effect of the good Spirit of God, and the happy Consequence of his Favour and Assistance. I question not but there are many amongst us, who have this experimental Testimony of the divine Presence; who are fully convinced by a happy Certainty, that God is present here in a more than ordinary Manner, by the Virtue and Efficacy of his Holy Spirit; and we may safely conclude from thence, that *Surely the Lord is in this Place.*

4. and Lastly, WE may justly say, that *God is in this Place*; because he is present here in a more peculiar Manner, by the Influence and Exercise of his Goodness.

WHEN we find our Fruits cherished by the kindly Warmth of the Sun, we question not but that the glorious Planet hath shone upon them: And when we are sensible of such Ravishments and Refreshments, as cannot be imparted but by God himself; we cannot doubt but he hath been present to us: That inward Return to our fervent Petitions, by which we are assured that our Prayers are heard, and our Desires granted; that chearful
Af-

a Motive to frequent Attendance.

II

Assurance, which the Promises of the Gospel imprint upon our Souls, by which we are convinced that we have a Share in them: That Ecstasy of Love in which we are swallowed up, upon a due Reception of the blessed Sacrament; by which we find all the Advantages of our Saviour's Sufferings, firmly conveyed and made over to us; are undeniable Evidences of the Divine Presence, and that *the Lord is in this Place*. Here it is, that God healeth the broken Heart and contrite Spirit, and maketh them *to hear of Joy and Gladness*; here it is, that he meeteth the humble Penitent, and sealeth to him the Pardon of his past Transgressions; here it is, that he receiveth the Catalogue of our Distresses, the summary Account of our Wants and our Necessities, and graciously answereth our Petitions and Desires; here it is, that he accepteth our grateful Acknowledgments, for his signal Mercies, whether national or personal, and giveth us the happy Earnest of yet greater Blessings. In a Word, all Advantages, whether spiritual or temporal, publick or private, are here sought for most effectually, and communicated most readily; and the Goodness of God is never more conspicuous, his Blessings are never more freely distributed; than when united

Vol. III. ted Devotions wrestle with the Almighty, and Heaven is assaulted and taken by this agreeable Violence. There is not any where a more considerable Instance of the great Regard which is likely to be had, to such as devoutly pray to God in this his Holy Place, than in the latter End of Solomon's Prayer, at his famous Dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem. *If there be, saith he, in the Land Famine, if there be Pestilence, Blasting, Mildew, Locust, if there be Caterpillar; if their Enemy besiege them in the Land of their Cities; whatsoever Plague, whatsoever Sickness there be; what Prayer or Supplication soever be made, by any Man, or by all thy People Israel, who shall know every Man the Plague of his Heart, and spread forth his Hands towards this House; then hear thou in Heaven thy dwelling Place, and forgive and do, and give to every Man according to his Ways; and therefore the Mercy-seat was its chiefest Ornament; where God was wont to appear between the Cherubims of Gold, to commune with the High Priest in relation to the People, and to receive his Intercession in behalf of the Congregation. God then is present with us here, in an extraordinary Manner, by the Influence and Exercise of his Goodness; and we*
 may

may safely conclude from thence, that *Serm.*
surely the Lord is in this Place. *XXIX.*

HAVING thus considered how, and in what Manner, God may be said to be present in this Place, I proceed,

II. To enquire what Effects should be wrought upon us, by a Consideration of this Nature.

AND these I shall reduce under the Two following Propositions :

1. THE Consideration of God's being in this Place, and that in so eminent and peculiar a Manner, should induce us to repair hither frequently and chearfully.

2. THE Consideration of God's being in this Place, and that in so eminent and peculiar a Manner, should oblige us, when we are here, to behave our selves reverently.

I. THEN, The Consideration of God's being in this Place, and that in so eminent and peculiar a Manner, should induce us to repair hither frequently and chearfully.

IF Honour or Advantage have any Power over us, or can engage us to be hearty and constant in our Attendance; they are no where to be met with in a more elevated Degree, than in the Exercise of that Duty which I am now recommending :

Vol. III. mending: For what can be more honourable, what more highly creditable; than to be admitted into his Presence and Conversation, *who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords?* What can more advance our Profit and our Interest, than to discourse with him familiarly, and represent to him our Condition, who is most able and most willing to relieve all our Necessities? Can so great and so good a Friend be visited too often? Or should such a Visit be paid with Uneasiness and Reluctancy? This is the Place, where he appointeth us to meet him, where he assureth us *he will be found by such as diligently seek him*; the Design of this Appointment is wholly in our Favour; he hath no Self-interest to manage by it, no By-ends of his own to forward or promote; his Happiness is beyond all Possibility of Improvement, and can receive no Addition from any of our Performances; he only desireth that we would qualify our selves to share some part of it, and give him an Opportunity of communicating it to us; and shall he then, who is at the Expence of imparting such considerable Advantages, court and importune us to accept of them; and we whose sole Interest it is to embrace them, hang back and refuse our true Felicity?

licity? Can we seriously pretend that we love our God (and no Man would be thought such a Wretch as not to do so) and yet be unwilling to appear in his Presence? He that loveth, is delighted with the Object of his Affection; can never have too much of its agreeable Society; is restless and uneasy when he is divorced from it, pleasant and composed when he hath recovered it again: and thus would it be with us in relation to our God, if we loved him as sincerely as we profess to do: we should hug all Opportunities of enjoying his Presence; should catch at all Occasions of conversing with him nearly; we should *rejoice* (with the Royal Psalmist) *and be exceeding glad, when they say, Let us go into the House of the Lord;* and should confess with him heartily and affectionately, *That one Day in his Courts is better than a Thousand.* For what are we the better for knowing God is here, unless we make a good Use of this our Knowledge? Would we only know it, that we may the better avoid him? Is God our Enemy, that we should shun his Presence? or can we find any Matter of Aversion or Disgust in him, who is the Sum of all Perfection? Are his Ambassadors ready to entertain us from him? Are his Ordinances prepared to be distributed

Serm.

XXIX.

Vol. III, buted amongst us? Is the Holy Spirit at
Hand with his Comfort and Assistance? and the divine Goodness waiting to be exercised? and shall we be so careless of our own true Happiness, as to forfeit all these Blessings by a wilful Absence, of which we may partake by barely coming for them? Nothing can be the Reason of so unaccountable a Proceeding, but that we love our Sins far better than our God, and are fonder of our Disease than of our Physician. Indeed, if we could always and entirely keep out of his Sight; if we could flatter our selves that the Darkness should cover us, and that his Right Hand should never find out those that hate him; this might prompt us to remain in our sinful Security, and might induce us to avoid his more immediate Presence, lest that might discover what we wished to conceal: but when we know that God will find out them with his Judgments, who do not take care to seek to him for Mercy; that we cannot exclude our selves totally from his Presence, but it lieth in us to make it either terrible, or comfortable; it is madness rather, with *Jonah*, to attempt an Impossibility, and to endeavour to flee from the Presence of the Lord, than to delight our selves with the Pleasure of his House,

House, and refresh our Souls in the Light of his Countenance. The Presence of a Prince maketh the Place of his Residence a Royal Palace; and wherever God is, there is Heaven. The Satisfaction which resulteth from our meeting him here, giveth us a Glimpse of the Beatifick Vision hereafter, and is a Foretaste of those Joys which shall one day be revealed. Thus much for the first Effect of our Consideration of God's being in this Place, That it should induce us to repair hither frequently and chearfully.

2. THE Consideration of God's being in this Place, and that in a more eminent and peculiar Manner, should oblige us, when we are here, to behave our selves reverently.

SOME People resort to the House of God, as they would to a Coffee-House, or a Theater, to a Place of worldly Business, or idle Diversion; their Time lieth heavy upon their Hands, and Custom hath directed them to spend some of it there; but they do it with so little Respect to the divine Presence, that by Laughing, and Whispering, and Sleeping, and such indecent Behaviour, they at once give Offence to their Christian Brethren, and affront God under his own Roof. A Fault which is aggravated in

Vol.III. a very high Manner, when committed by those who attend on him at this Time, and in this Place ; since to the scandalous Irreverence which they are guilty of towards their God, it superaddeth a Disrespect to that Royal Pair, whose Presence, whose Authority, and whose Example, should give an effectual Check to all such Indecencies. We had better indeed run into the former Error, and wholly stay away from the Church of God, than behave our selves, when in it, with Irreverence and Disrespect ; inasmuch as a bare Neglect is more excusable, than an open and direct Rudeness and Affront. It is not then enough, that we go into the Tabernacle of the Lord, unless (with the Royal Psalmist) *we fall down upon our Knees before his Footstool : Serve the Lord, saith he, with Fear, and rejoice before him with Reverence* ; we must jointly pay an inward and an outward Respect, and worship the Creator of our Souls and Bodies, with both Parts of his divine Workmanship ; and sure if we consider that he is present, who is the Almighty Majesty of Heaven and Earth, who formed us out of nothing, and can reduce us to nothing again ; it will engage us so to regulate our Affections and our Actions, that no Thought, no Gesture of Mind or Body

Body may be unfit to appear before so venerable an Inspector. For this will banish all Hypocrisy from amongst us, and will make our Devotion sincere and hearty. For can we suppose that God is in this Place, who is the great Discerner of all Hearts; and yet hope or pretend to impose upon him, by a formal Pageantry, an outside of Religion? Can we think to put him off with the Husk for the Kernel, Appearance for Reality, Shadow for Substance? No certainly, those Men who thus take up with a Surface of Piety, whose Devotion is no more than Skin-deep; must needs flatter themselves, that they can cheat God as well as their Brethren; and quiet the Alarms of their clamorous Consciences with *Tush, God will never regard it; or, Is there any Knowledge in the most High?* whereas he who is assured that God is present with him, will endeavour to approve himself right in his Eyes; and to be the same Man in the Sight of his God, that he appeareth to be in the View of his Fellow-creatures. But farther, as this will banish all Hypocrisy, so will it also remove all Coldness or Lukewarmness, and make our Devotion be vigorous and fervent; we shall not dare to perform things perfunctorily or indifferently, when

Vol.III. we have so awful a Witness of all our Actions. It is the Zeal and Life with which they are animated, that can only make our imperfect Endeavours acceptable with God: This it is that recommendeth our weakest Essays, and stampeth a higher Value even upon our best Performances. If then we are convinced that God is in this Place, who rateth all our Doings according to our Intentions, and maketh that the Standard of their Worth and Goodness; we shall never dare to touch upon them slightly and superficially; but shall endeavour to make them valuable in his Eyes, by the Seriousness of our Attention, and the Earnestness of our Application: Thus will this Consideration of the divine Presence have a powerful Influence upon all our Devotions; stamping them with Sincerity, and enlivening them with Zeal. And thus much shall suffice, as to the second general Head of my Discourse; namely, to enquire what Effect should be wrought upon us, by the Consideration of God's being in this Place.

AND now what Life and Spirit would this give to Christianity, what Reputation to Religion, what Vigour to Devotion; if we would all comply heartily with these Engagements? If the Houses
of

of God were continually frequented by us, and we comported our selves in them with Reverence and Regularity? How would this put Atheism and Profaneness out of Countenance? and by inspiring us daily more and more, with an awful Respect for the great Author of our Being, insensibly reform both our Principles and our Practices!

Serm.
XXIX.

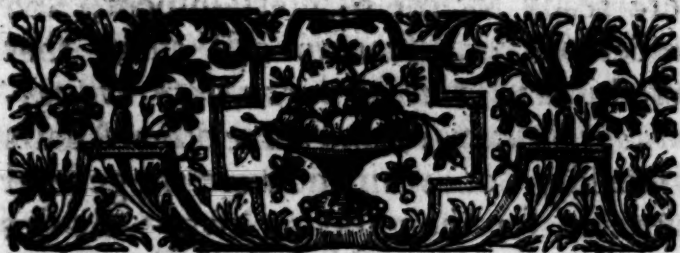
BUT in order to the compassing such considerable Ends, let me add to what hath been said one Word of Advice, to such as would thus worship God in the Beauty of Holiness; namely, that they should not rush too suddenly into his House, out of the tumult and hurry of their worldly Business; nor plunge themselves too speedily into their temporal Concernments, as soon as they have set their Feet out of it again: but let them prepare themselves for their Duty by Meditation before hand, and keep it fresh within their Memory by Recollection afterwards; ascending by degrees from the World to God, and descending again gradually to the World from him. Thus shall we make a due Use of God's Presence, of his eminent and peculiar Inspection into our Actions; not such a one as resteth in Speculation only, but which will engage us to practise what such

Vol. III. Knowledge should enforce: namely, to be constant in our Attendance upon God in this Place; to lay aside, when we come hither, all Hypocrisy and Lukewarmness; in a Word, so to manage our selves in each part of our Devotions, as it becometh those who are convincingly assured, that God is a Witness of all their Performances, *That surely the Lord is in this Place.*

*To him the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might,
Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth
and for evermore. Amen.*



SERMON



SERMON XXX.

All true Penitents welcome
Guests at the Lord's Table.

LUKE xiv. Verse 23.

*And the Lord said unto the Servant,
Go out into the Highways and Hedges,
and compel them to come in, that my
House may be filled.*

TH E Words of my Text Serm.
XXX.
are part of a Parable which
our Saviour spake unto the
Jews, concerning a certain
Man that made a great Sup-
per, and invited many Guests to partake
C 4 of

Vol.III.of it with him; but when all Things were ready for their Entertainment, and the Servant was sent to call them that were bidden, *they all began with one consent to make excuse*; and some other Affairs of worldly Concernment were the general Pretence for their staying away: At this uncivil and ungrateful sort of Procedure the Master of the Feast was highly incensed, as being a Neglect of his proffered Kindness, an open Affront and Disrespect: he therefore resolveth *that none of those that were bidden should taste of his Supper*; that he will no more expose himself to be slighted by them, by repeating an Invitation which they disregarded: yet being desirous to have his Table furnished with Guests, he sendeth his Servant into the *Streets and Lanes of the City*; and commandeth him to *bring in the Poor and the Maimed, the Halt and the Blind*, such whose Necessities and Infirmities might make them glad to comply with such a gracious Overture: but not enough of these themselves being found to compleat the designed Number, the Lord commandeth his Servant to be urgent and importunate, and even to constrain others to be his Guests; *And the Lord said unto the Servant, Go out into the Highways and Hedges, and compel them*
to

welcome Guests at the Lord's Table.

25

to come in, that my House may be filled. Sermon.

XXX.

One would think it a Matter very strange and improbable, that when a Feast had been prepared after so solemn and stately a Manner; when the Oxen and the Fatlings were killed, to make the Entertainment more great and desirable, that all the Difficulty should lie, in finding Persons willing to partake of it, and that there should be need of Compulsion in such a Case; I say, one would think this a Matter very strange and improbable, did we not daily find the Parable exemplified in Concernments of a higher and more important Nature. We see a Feast of Love prepared frequently, the greatest Delicacies, and choicest Dainties offered to our Acceptance, the Flesh and Blood of the Son of God set before us, to furnish out the Table richly and invitingly; and yet, though we are bidden with the greatest Earnestness, how few are there that come to this Holy Supper, in respect of those great Numbers that turn their Backs upon it! how small an Excuse will serve to keep us away! how little an encumbrance of worldly Business will suffice for a Pretence to absent our selves from it! Not only those who are misled by spiritual Pride, and a fond Conceit of their Self-sufficiency, presumptuously to sup-

Vol. III. suppose that they stand in no need of it ; but such also whose Wants and Necessities call loudly upon them for so seasonable a Relief, are backward however in laying hold of it, and will scarce enter in, unless they are compelled. It is remarkable here, that there are three sorts of Persons, to whom the Servant addresseth himself, by the Commandment of his Lord.

THE *first* are those who were Companions and Acquaintances of the Master of the Feast, and are represented to us as Men of Wealth and Substance, for one of them had been purchasing a Piece of Land, another had been buying a Yoke of Oxen ; and these are barely invited to the Supper.

THE *second* are such as were poor and infirm within that City where the Lord resided, so we find them stiled the *Poor and the Maimed ; the Halt and the Blind ;* and these were conducted by the Servant, and brought into the Guest-chamber.

THE *third* were such as were perfect Strangers to the Master of the Feast, as well as unfit for so noble an Entertainment, being picked up in the High-ways and Hedges : and these the Servant is commanded to compel to come in.

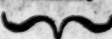
ANSWERABLE to these there are three Serm.
sorts of Christians, whose Appearance is XXX.
expected at the Holy Table of the Lord. 

I. THE first are such who have a competent Stock of Piety and Devotion, have a kind of Familiarity with God and Goodness, *have eaten and drank in his Presence*, and been frequent Partakers of this heavenly Repast; and to such as these a single Invitation is thought sufficient, because they are acquainted with the Sweetness of the Treat, and are fitly qualified to be Guests and Companions; and if these at any Time shall absent themselves, who have tasted the Deliciousness of that Bread of Life, and shall suffer some trifling Concerns of this World to withhold them from their Attendance at that sacred Table, the Fault will in them be very inexcusable, and the Lord of the Feast will be angry with them. And these are they who when they abstain, have no other Excuse, but that their worldly Business would not suffer them to come.

II. A second Sort of Christians are such who have some kind of Relation to the Lord of the Feast, who are indeed to be found within the Streets of his City; but are so poor and so infirm, and have so
small

Vol. III. small a Stock of spiritual Abilities, that they think themselves not at all qualified to appear at so pompous and splendid an Entertainment; now such as these the Servant of the Lord is commanded to enquire out, and to bring them in; to combat with their Modesty, and conduct them to the Table; to countenance and encourage them, and to assure them of a kind and hearty Reception; and these are they, who forbear to communicate, out of too scrupulous a Sense of their own Unworthiness.

III. THE third and Last, are they, who are neither the Lord's Acquaintances nor Fellow-citizens, but straggle abroad in the Highways and Hedges that have no Knowledge of the Master of the Feast, have never heard of his Bounty and Hospitality; that scarce know what is intended by the Supper of the Lord; but are buried either in their Sins, or in their Ignorance: now such as these the Lord commandeth his Servant *to compel to come in*; to set before them the Necessity of their approaching to his Table, and by the most cogent Arguments and Persuasions, to constrain them to be Partakers of this Holy Supper. And these are they whomever communi-
cate

cate, either because they do not know their Serm.
Duty, or else, because they do not care XXX.
to practise it. 

THE First and Second of these sorts of People I shall at present but lightly touch upon; since they being supposed to have some, though different Degrees of Piety and Knowledge; cannot therefore pretend to be ignorant, how very necessary the Exercise of this Duty is; to keep up all spiritual Graces in the one, and to cultivate and improve them in the other; and I shall more chiefly address my following Discourse to the third sort of People which I lately instanced, those that are found in the *Highways and Hedges*, who are either withheld by Ignorance, or Irreligion; and I shall use my utmost Efforts in obedience to the Command of my Lord and Master, to compel them to come in. However that the others may have no Pretence to abstain, I shall first very briefly refresh their Memories, by addressing myself in a Word or two to them. And,

I. As to the former of them, such who have a competent Stock of Piety, and yet sometimes are withheld by their worldly Business. Our Saviour thinketh them in such happy Circumstances, that they need

Vol. III. need no more but a single Invitation, they ought only to be told that the Supper is ready, to make them come to be Partakers of it; they are his Friends whom he hath often conversed with, and who ought to value so precious a Familiarity; they are his usual Guests, who have feasted with him frequently, and who know how delicious the Repast is which attendeth them; and therefore he only telleth them that it is prepared, and questioneth not but they will make haste to share in it: they have already felt those sublime Raptures, which are the Companions and Attendants of this celestial Feast; and the agreeable Relish of this heavenly Manna cannot but have left a Sweetness upon their Palates, which may reasonably invite them to taste of it again: no Arguments or Persuasions can be supposed necessary to them, whose own Experience of this blessed Entertainment, should happily supersede all other Inducements; and recommend it to them more successfully, than the most elaborate Reasonings of other People. But if such as these, who are so happily qualified for the due Reception of these Holy Mysteries, and who have such strong Inducements to be Partakers of them, shall yet prefer a little worldly Business before the Feast of

welcome Guests at the Lord's Table. 31

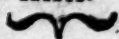
Love; shall notwithstanding withdraw themselves from this Table of the Lord, and rudely refuse to come, when solemnly invited; we find no other Method made use of to them, but the bare reminding them of their Duty; the Lord indeed sent his Servant at Supper time to say to them that were bidden, *Come, for all Things are now ready*: and he is, we see, so angry at their Refusal, whose Company he did not question but he should have had; so displeased to find them make such frivolous Excuses, that he took a solemn and serious Resolution, that *none of them should taste of his Supper*; a Consideration, which if duly weighed, will sufficiently enforce, to such sort of Persons, the great Necessity of their coming to the Table of the Lord. But,

II. As to those others, who not being so great Proficients in Devotion, are withheld by a Sense of their own want of Merit, and think themselves unworthy to communicate: they are indeed his poor Fellow-citizens, they are found within the Streets of his own City, and so are in some measure dependent upon him; but being *Poor and Maimed, Halt and Blind*, being conscious to themselves, that

Vol. III. that they are too mean and despicable to be made his Companions, to sit down and to feast at his Table with him, they perhaps hold off, and are contented to admire his Bounty at a Distance; or to stand before his Gates and crave an Alms there, without daring to press in amongst the Guests of Quality; as for these, the Lord sendeth out his Servant and commandeth him to bring them in; Modesty, and a Sense of their own Defects, is apt to make them backward in accepting of a general Invitation; Sure, they will say, we cannot be meant amongst those that are invited; there is no room for us at so pompous an Entertainment; are we fit to partake of such a splendid Feast? We have no Faith to qualify us for appearing, no Sorrow for our Sins, that is sufficient to recommend us; no such Charity for our Brethren as is required to make us welcome; and therefore the Invitation cannot be meant to us. With these the Servant of the Lord must deal after this manner; he must assure them that he is sent particularly to them, with an express Command to bring them in; that it is true indeed they are poor and infirm, but his Lord, who is no Respector of Persons, can communicate both Health and Riches to them; that if their Faith be

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weak,



weak, there is the Place to have it strengthened; if their Repentance be imperfect, there is the Place to gain a greater Loathing against Sin, and to confirm their Resolutions of living well for the future; moreover, if their Charity be colder than it ought, there is the Place to kindle up the Flames of Brotherly Affection; and to make it burn more vigorously and effectually; and therefore his Lord hath particularly enjoined him, to bring such as them in to his Supper. And this Consideration, if thoroughly listened to, will strongly induce such sorts of Persons to pay their Attendance at the Table of the Lord.

III. HAVING thus briefly touched upon these two Heads, I proceed to address myself to the third sort of Persons, such as lie abroad in the *Highways and Hedges*, who either abstain through Ignorance, or Irreligion, and must be compelled to come in; and here I shall consider them under their several Circumstances, both as they are ignorant, and as they are irreligious; and shall clearly shew, how great a Necessity lieth upon such People, to qualify themselves for the Reception of the Holy Sacrament. And,

1. As to those who are ignorant of their Duty; who abstain because they
D know

Vol. III. know not what the Sacrament meaneth, and have no true Notion of those sacred Mysteries. I would have them consider, that no Ignorance will excuse one in the Sight of God, but such a one as is Invincible. Madmen and Fools may make that their Plea (or rather that Plea may be made for them) and may thereby be guiltless in the Omission of a Duty which was not possible to be comprehended by them: but in all others amongst us, the Ignorance must be wilful; and is so far from excusing the Fault, that it is a great Aggravation of it; since it must needs impeach us of the grossest Carelessness in relation to that which is our bounden Duty. Not to instance in the great Advantages which every one hath of understanding this Duty, by listening to Discourses of the present Nature; the Bible is open to every one amongst us; and the Instructions which it giveth are so plain and easy, that they are intelligible even to the meanest Capacity; were we under the unhappy Circumstances of some People, from whom these Wells of Salvation are barred and shut up, we might possibly have something to plead in our own Behalf; and I believe that many a poor deluded *Romanist* shall rise up in Judgment against Protestants, and condemn

damn them; who, if they had the Advantages of which we are possessed, would have carefully practised what we scandalously neglect. But God forbid, that *where the Grace of God hath thus abounded to us, there Sin should abound much more*; God forbid, that our Ignorance should be grossest, where we have the greatest Means and Opportunities of being instructed! It will be in vain for us to pretend Inability, or to cry out, *Who is sufficient for these Things?* since the necessary Duties of Christianity, and all those particularly that relate even to this great Mystery, are comprehensible by the dullest Understanding; no Body but knoweth what is meant by Repentance, by Faith, and by Charity; or if we can suppose any to be ignorant of their Meaning, it is easy to inform themselves what is intended by them. And is Ignorance a Thing to be fond or proud of? Will any Man value himself upon his want of Knowledge? or hug himself in a Defect of that Reason, by which he is distinguished from Beasts and Insects? To be sensible of one's Ignorance, is always supposed the first Step to Knowledge; the Soul of Man having a natural Tendency to the bettering and improvement of its intellectual

Vol.III.Faculties. Can any Man then pretend to the Name of a Christian, that doeth not at least know thus much, that the Son of God came to dwell amongst Men, to give us Rules and Examples of a holy Life, and to dye for the Sins of the whole World? that before his Death he ordered us to keep up the Remembrance of him still fresh amongst us, and not to forget that Sacrifice which was offered in our Behalf? that he instituted then this holy Supper, *to shew forth his Death till he should come again?* That an intire Repentance, a hearty Sorrow for all our Sins past, with firm Resolutions of living piously for the future; a Trust and Dependence upon God's Mercies through Christ, with a devout Gratitude for his inestimable Benefits, in dying to purchase for us everlasting Life, and an extensive Love to all our Brethren, are the necessary Dispositions by which we are qualified for a due Reception of these sacred Elements? Can any Man, I say, deserve the Name of a Christian, who is not thus far instructed in the Principles of his Religion? and how miserable must the Condition of that Man be, who is wholly undeserving of that venerable Name? Would not any Man, who pretendeth to this kind of Ignorance, look upon

upon himself as affronted and abused, to meet no better a Title than that of Pagan or of Infidel? and yet this is the very Character which he giveth himself, when he professeth that he knoweth not the first Rudiments of Christianity. But if his Condition be as he representeth it, why doeth he not set himself to better and improve it? Is he sensible of his Defects, and yet ashamed to be informed? Can any Man be guilty of so foolish a Modesty, as rather to continue in a State of Ignorance, than submit to be instructed? It is an unaccountable and vicious Bashfulness, which hindereth us from gaining that Knowledge we confess we want; Christ's Business into the World was to teach the Ignorant, and his Followers have the Name of Disciples, or Learners; and therefore it is a renouncing our Dependence upon him, not to endeavour to profit by his Instructions. It is not required, that every one, who cometh to the blessed Sacrament, should be able to dispute about the intricate Questions that are proposed concerning it, or be able to define how and after what manner Christ is present in it; it is only required of him that he know thus much, that it is a Commemoration of that Sacrifice which our Saviour once offered up.

Serm.
XXX.

Vol. III. for us all; that he who partaketh of it faithfully and worthily, doth thereby seal to himself all the Benefits of his Death and Passion; that we renew in that our baptismal Vow, of fighting manfully under Christ's Banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil; and therefore that it layeth upon us a great Obligation *to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*, lest otherwise we should incur a fresh Guilt of Perjury. This is all that is necessary to be known, by those who repair to this blessed Sacrament, and he who is ignorant of thus much, scarce knoweth that there is such a Thing as Christian Religion in the World. If there be any then amongst all who now hear me, that have hitherto been ignorant of their Duty in this case, let them now in the Name of God inform themselves better; and let them be assured, that a wilful want of Knowledge will never excuse them in the Sight of God; that whatever Ignorance they may lie under, it is absolutely their own Fault, since the Means of Instruction are open to all, and it is both their Duty and their Interest to make use of them. And if this Consideration will not work upon them, nothing that I know will compel them to come in. But few can be supposed to be
in

in these Circumstances, who have for any time been Members of a Christian Community; and therefore it is only made use of by some Persons, to hide the Irreligion which lieth at the Bottom; and they only pretend a want of Knowledge, to cloak their Unwillingness to practise what they know. I shall therefore, Serm. XXX.

2. EXAMINE the Case of the Irreligious; such who come not to the Sacrament, because they have no Veneration for such a holy Mystery, or would not quit their Sins in order to its Reception; and these lie under the greatest Necessity imaginable, to break off their evil Courses by a speedy Repentance, and must either be given up to everlasting Destruction, or be compelled to come in. And here we must not think, that by Compulsion is meant any corporal Force to be employed, or violent Method to be made use of: some, I know, have wrested this Text, to patronize by it that unchristian Practice of making Converts with Fire and Faggot: but our Saviour's Kingdom was not of this World, and he never exercised a Jurisdiction of this Nature; the Force which he used was that of Argument and Persuasion, and it is only by such Methods as these, that we must compel the Irreligious to come in.

Vol.III. These do not always use the Plea of Ignorance, and therefore must be addressed to as such Servants, *who know their Master's Will, but will not do it*; and the sad Consequence which attendeth their Disobedience of *being beaten with many Stripes*, must be insisted upon most earnestly and frequently. They have no true Sense of the Deplorableness of their Condition, they know not the Miseries to which they are exposed, or never seriously reflect upon the Sadness of them; they are not at all sensible of the vast Advantages which they deprive themselves of; but had rather still grossly *feed upon the Flesh-pots of Egypt*, than eat the *Bread of Heaven* with the true *Israelites*; their Affections are linked to the things of this World, and they have no Relish or Discernment of spiritual Entertainments: such as these the Servant of the Lord is commanded *to compel to come in*; he must combat their Sophistry with Strength of Reason; must labour to convince them of the Error of their Ways; must turn their Souls outwards to their View, and make them see the Filthiness and Corruption of them; must endeavour to startle them by a Sense of their Danger, and make Hell Fire to flash in their Faces: must shew them the Brink of the Precipice upon which they stand, that they are running headlong in-

to everlasting Destruction ; and are just slipping down into an Eternity of Torments. We must lay before them the Power and Efficacy of this Body and Blood of Christ, for the rescuing them out of those Miseries to which they are about to expose themselves ; and though they have not any manner of Appetite to it, as to a Feast of extraordinary Sweetness, but look upon it rather as a physical Prescription, with Uneasiness and Disgust ; yet must they be informed, that it is absolutely necessary for their everlasting Health ; and that they will infallibly be sick unto the Death, if they do not resolve to participate of it. They must be often told movingly and affectionately, how much they are indebted to their dying Saviour ; who left them this Legacy as the most proper Means to restore them to a State of Happiness and Security ; and the Baseness of that Ingratitude must be urged home to them, which shall repay such Kindness with Scorn and Disrespect : and though they may be averse to Discourses of this Nature, and all that can be said may appear unto them, as the Prophet wordeth it, but *Line upon Line, Line upon Line ; Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept ;* yet must not the Lord's Servant be wearied out,

Serm.
XXX.

Vol. III. out, but try to overcome them with meer
 ~~~~~ Importunity, and by that Means at least  
*compel them to come in*: he must insist up-  
 on these and such other Motives in Sea-  
 son and out of Season, till God shall give  
 Success to his Endeavours in his own  
 good time; or at least if he continueth to  
 be unsuccessful, he hath thereby delivered  
 his own Soul. There is yet another man-  
 ner of Compulsion which the Church is  
 authorized to make use of in these Ca-  
 ses; and that is Ecclesiastical Censure  
 and Excommunication, the cutting them  
 off from that Body of which they are  
 corrupt Members, till they learn to va-  
 lue the Communion of Saints, by be-  
 ing debarred from the Privileges of it;  
 sometimes also the Civil Government  
 hath thought fit to exclude all such from  
 any publick Employment, who cannot  
 produce authentick Testimonials of their  
 having been conversant in this Duty;  
 but God forbid, that any amongst us  
 should carry their Impiety to such a  
 height, as to stand in need of such Me-  
 thods to reclaim them: the private Con-  
 sideration of their own true Interest  
 should work upon them more forcibly,  
 than this Severity of Discipline; and if  
 they will but consider, that this must be  
 done, unless they will hazard their eternal  
 Wel-

Welfare ; this would effectually induce them to a Compliance, and is sufficient of it self to *compel them to come in.* Serm. XXX.  
For certainly Reason is to a thinking Man more powerful and coercive, than any outward Violence ; and this will acquaint the most Irreligious, that it is unsafe to run any hazard in Matters of everlasting Moment and Importance ; that if he had a Saviour who thus died for him, and left behind him this Legacy of Love, and enjoineth him to frequent it for his Sake, and in order to renew the Memorial of his Goodness ; he cannot provoke or affront him more highly, than by refusing to make so small a Return for Benefits of so considerable a Value : Reason will tell him, that he is in great danger of turning this abused Love of his Saviour into Enmity, and exposing himself to all that his Anger can inflict ; and if he farther believeth that he is able to avenge himself (and we speak not now of the Ignorant, but of the Irreligious) he must conclude that such an Omission will make him liable to the utmost Extremities. These sorts of Considerations, if he hath not a Conscience that is seared or stupified, and hath not sold himself utterly to work Wickedness, if he is not given up to a reprobate

Vol.III. reprobate Mind, that *seeing he should not perceive, and hearing he should not understand,* will abundantly convince him of the Necessity of his Compliance, and will forcibly *compel him to come in.* For most certain it is, that if it were not absolutely necessary that all should be Partakers of this holy Supper; the Lord would never have commanded his Servant to invite one, to bring in another, and to compel a third. Ye therefore, who are the Friends duly expected at the Table of the Lord, who are his familiar Companions, and his usual Guests, I invite you now in the Name of the Lord, I bid you all in Christ's Behalf. Next Lord's Day the Table will be furnished, all things will be ready, come unto the Feast: Let no temporal Concernments interpose to hinder your Appearance at this blessed Banquet. Suppose, when you are about to turn your Back upon it, you should hear your Saviour speaking to you from Heaven, and saying, Friends, whither go you? Whom do you run from? from your Saviour, from your Redeemer? Is it nothing that I gave my Blood for you, nothing that I am now about to give it to you? Would not you be ashamed to make such an Answer as this? Lord, I love the World better than thee;  
and



and I have some Business that I must dispatch; when I am at leisure, and have nothing else to do, I will, perhaps, attend upon thy Table: yet all the Excuses which these Men can make, will appear to be as empty and frivolous as this: Do not then refuse this gracious Invitation, but remember, that I have executed my Lord's Commands, and in his Name have bidden you to his Supper. Ye also, whose Wants and Imperfections may possibly dissuade you from making your Approaches to this bountiful Entertainment; consider that the Servant of the Lord will speedily conduct you to the Feast, to bring you into the Presence of your Lord, and there to seat you at the Table amongst his Friends and Favourites. Let not the Sense of your own Imperfections, make you resolve to keep back from it; he knoweth them as well as you can, and yet hath commanded us to bring you thither: If you are Poor, come thither to grow Rich; if ye are Infirm, there meet with him, who giveth Health to the Sick, Feet to the Lame, and Eyes to the Blind; ye are those that are most in need of that Repast, to strengthen and encourage you, to quicken and enliven you; ye are the Sick which have need of that Physician: I assure you of the Kindness

Vol. III. nefs of your Lord and Master, that your Reception shall be hearty, and your Appearance welcome: it is to think your selves more Wise than he is, to withdraw and absent your selves, when he commandeth you to be sought for: Draw near then I intreat you, to the Table of the Lord, and resolve to take that holy Sacrament to your Comfort; bring but along with you good and honest Hearts, and he who hath ordered us to bring you thither; will not fail to accept of you when you are there.

LASTLY, Ye that are Ignorant or Irreligious, that have carelessly neglected to inform your selves of your Duty, or wilfully forborn to act accordingly; I adjure you to consider the Danger of your Condition, and how little such Excuses will avail you before God: were there not a Necessity of your coming in, we should never have been commanded to compel you to it. Come then, ye also, to the Supper; but leave your Ignorance and Irreligion behind you, when you come; these are no fit Company to bring along with you, to such a holy Entertainment; the Necessity of your Coming will not excuse you, for pressing in rudely or unpreparedly; it is necessary indeed that you should appear there, but it is as necessary, that you  
should

should fit your selves for it ; and he that Serm.  
 had not on a Wedding Garment, was as xxx.  
 roughly treated, and as severely punished, as those who had presumptuously refused to come. As far as Reason can work upon you, I have endeavoured to compel you to come in, and yet alas ! How few are those who usually Communicate in comparison of those Numbers who refrain from coming ? How many attend to Discourses of this Nature, without any Intention of reducing them to Practice ? Let us, in the Name of God, apply our selves more seriously to the frequent Reception of these most sacred Mysteries : Let such as have had an Invitation make haste to comply with it ; let those who have been backward, consent to be brought in ; let such as stand in need of Compulsion, be wrought upon by that obliging Violence ; that so the Table may be furnished with Guests : and let us all resolve, in Contemplation of the great Mercies which we daily receive, and especially of that signal one, which we are about to commemorate at the approaching Festival, *to return this Reward unto the Lord, for all the Benefits he hath done unto us ; namely, to receive the Cup of Salvation, and to call upon the Name of the Lord.*  
 Con-



Vol.III. Consider what hath been said, and the  
 Lord give you Understanding.

*To him the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
 be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might,  
 Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth  
 and for evermore. Amen.*



SERMON



# SERMON XXXI.

God's Commands not grievous to the sincere Christian.

~~And his Commandments are not grievous.~~

I St. JOHN v. latter Part of Ver. 3.

*And his Commandments are not grievous.*

**S**OME People entertain strange Opinions of God, and take up unaccountable Notions of Religion; the former they look upon as the Almighty Tyrant of Heaven and Earth, who treateth his Subjects as so many Gally Slaves, confining them perpetually to an uneasy

Serm.  
XXXI.  
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E Drud-

Vol.III. Drudgery, and exacting such a Service as is toilsome and distasteful : the latter they represent to themselves as an Object of Deformity, arm her like a Fury with Whips and Firebrands, and having thus first dressed her up like a Bugbear, they afterwards tremble at the Frightfulness of her Appearance. The unhappy Consequences of such ill-grounded Conceptions are an Aversion to the One, and a loathing of the Other ; and Men are fatally misled, by Errors of this Nature, at once to renounce the Service of their God, and the Practice of those Rules which he hath prescribed them to walk by. Whereas if they would consider Things soberly and impartially, they would at the same Time do justice to the Goodness of God, who dealeth with his Creatures as a tender and indulgent Father, and acknowledge the Mildness and Equity of his Injunctions, being convinced that his *Commandments are not grievous.*

I SHALL therefore endeavour in my following Discourse to make out the Truth of this useful Proposition ; namely, *That it is a Scandal cast upon Religion, to represent it as a Thing harsh and uneasy ; since the Exercises of Piety are not accompanied with any such Difficulty*  
as



as is usually supposed, God's Commandments are not grievous. Serm.  
XXXI.

God had so absolute a Right to our Obedience, by creating us out of Nothing, that had he commanded us to attempt the Performance of things but barely possible to be done, though attended with the greatest Hardships and Uneasinesses, he might justly have expected our Compliance with his Injunctions. But instead of exercising so severe an Authority, how easy was the Trial of Obedience which he exacted from our first Parents? obliging them only to restrain a single Appetite, and that but in one Particular, while the whole Creation besides was freely at their Disposal, to contribute to their Delight and Satisfaction: yet such was their Ingratitude and Disobedience, that they presently infringed this most equitable Command; thereby exposing themselves and their Posterity to the Loss of those Advantages they stood possessed of, and to the heavy Wrath of an offended God. And now we had forfeited all manner of Title to the divine Favour, and we must have acknowledged his Mercy to be infinite, in accepting any the hardest Terms for our Reconciliation: to have spent the Years of *Mathuselah* in a con-

Vol. III. tinal Suffering of the most exquisite

~ Torments, would have been an easy Com-  
 mutation for these everlasting Pains to  
 which we were made liable; and any  
 State of Misery, in order to an Atonement,  
 that was not infinite or eternal, was to have  
 been accepted with Joy and Gratitude, in that  
 lost Condition to which we were reduced: But  
 God, who doeth not delight to grieve the Sons of  
 Men, hath made his second Covenant as  
 favourable as the first; requiring nothing of us  
 but what is practicable, nay delightful; and  
 only exacting a due Observance of such  
 Commandments as are not grievous. The Truth  
 of this Assertion will be evidently made out,  
 by a due Examination of the three following  
 Particulars:

- I. THE Nature of those Things which we are obliged to perform.
- II. THE Assistance given in order to the Performance of them.
- III. THE Rewards annexed to the Performance.

FROM the Consideration of all which it will undeniably appear, that the Exercises of Piety are not accompanied with such Difficulty as is usually supposed, and that *God's Commandments are not grievous.*

I. THEN, from the Consideration of the Nature of these Things which we are obliged to perform, it will undeniably appear, that the Exercises of Piety are neither burthensome nor uneasy.

THOSE Things can neither be burthensome nor uneasy, which are exactly suited and accommodated to the Nature of those from whom they are required ; but such are all the Duties of our Christian Profession, directly conformable to the Elements of our Being, and agreeable to the Dictates of Reason and Humanity. We are indeed too apt, upon all occasions, to transfer the Fault from our selves, and to fix it upon the Almighty ; and when we find an inward Repugnancy to the due Performance of his righteous Commandments, we impute it rather to the Harshness of the Injunctions themselves, than to the Corruptness of our own vitious Inclinations : But the Thief or the Murtherer might as well impeach the Severity of those Laws by which he is condemned, for acting agreeably to the Baseness or the Cruelty of his Disposition ; and every Sin would have a just Defence, if such a Plea might be admitted : No, the divine Laws were never designed to gratify the Sinner, but to



Vol. III. oblige the Man; and it is a sufficient  
 ~~~~~ Proof that they are equitable in themselves, that they carry no Uneasiness or Difficulty along with them, if we find them conformable to our human Nature, without being agreeable to our sinful Appetites; and,

I. MAN is a sociable Creature; and whatsoever promoteth the Good of Society, and the Advantages of mutual Commerce and Conversation, must be agreeable to human Nature, and consequently neither burthensome nor uneasy. But can any Thing promote these Ends more signally or effectually, than the constant Exercise of that most Christian Precept, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them*, and others of the like Nature? This erecteth an impartial Court of Judicature in every Man's own Breast, by which the strictest Justice may be administred; it giveth us a true Standard for all our outward Dealings, and teacheth us by what Weights and Measures our Proceedings should be regulated; it maketh us put our selves in our Brother's stead, and then we need not doubt but we shall do him Justice, since no Man ever designed to injure his own self: it obligeth us to love our Neighbours as our selves; and since every Man
 cherish-

cherisheth his own Flesh, this will teach us to work no manner of Ill to our Neighbour. Can any thing more advance the good of a Community, than those most Christian Doctrines of doing good to all, of forgiving Injuries, of returning Good for Evil, and such like? Murthers and Adulteries, Robberies and false Testimonies, Strifes and Envyings, with all the other Causes of Disorder and Confusion, are banished away by Maxims of this Nature; and all Things that can render Society profitable and delightful, are introduced and supported by them. If therefore Man be considered as a sociable Creature, Injunctions of this kind must be easy as well as practicable; *God's Commandments are not grievous.* But,

2. MAN is a contemplative Creature; and whatsoever proposeth to his Contemplation an Object valuable and eminently desirable, must needs be agreeable to human Nature; and consequently neither burthensome nor uneasy. Now all those Precepts which oblige us to know God, and to love him, to withdraw our Affections from things below, and to seek those things which are above; are visibly directed to this End. Can any thing more delightfully employ the busy Imagination, than the meditating upon such

Vol. II. Perfections as are Infinite? How must the Understanding be ravished and delighted, in the Consideration of unlimited Mercy, impartial Justice, almighty Power, eternal Truth, and unbounded Wisdom? What admirable Variety must it meet with when it launcheth forth, from this material World, into the Land of Spirits, and findeth a Space to range in which hath no Bounds? How little and inconsiderable must the Things of this World appear, when we are acquainted with the Beauty and Riches of the Invisible one? How dazling will the Lustre of Virtue be, when we come to view it naked and unveiled? and how just an Esteem shall we put upon it then, when its Value is truly understood? What Entertainment can be more desirable, than to reflect upon the Nature and Attributes of God, with his Ways of dealing with the Sons of Men? To be conversant about an Eternity of Happiness or Misery, and carefully to examine the Means and Methods of attaining to the one, and securing our selves from the other? If Man therefore be considered as a contemplative Creature, those Christian Precepts, which direct his Thoughts to such sublime Objects, must needs be easy as well as beneficial; *God's Commandments are not grievous.* But,

3. MAN is a deliberative Creature; one that weigheth and balanceth before he determineth; compareth things with one another, and accordingly either chooseth or rejecteth them; whatsoever therefore enableth him to make a right Judgment of Things, and to discover Realities from Appearances, must be agreeable to human Nature, and consequently neither burthensome nor uneasy. But can any thing be more directly levelled at this Mark, than all those Evangelical Precepts are, which oblige us to try well and to examine all Things; *to judge our selves, that we be not judged; to flee from Evil, and to learn to do Good?* which unravel and lay open all the Deceits of Sin, and distinguish a real Good from that which seemeth so? By these he is instructed to choose a less Evil for the Avoidance of a greater; willingly to undergo temporal Inconveniences, to escape such Miseries as are eternal: by these he is directed to renounce a less Good in pursuance of a greater; chearfully to sacrifice a momentary Satisfaction for the Attainment of such Pleasures, as are everlasting: By these he is enabled to pull off the Vizard from the most alluring and specious Transgressions; and to spy the Loathsomeness and Deformity, which lay hid beneath that

Serm.
XXXI.

Vol. III that deceitful Semblance : by these he is taught to have a true Notion of Good and Evil ; and thereby to be fitly qualified for the Election of the one, and Refusal of the other : in a Word, by these he is informed how much more valuable the Soul is than the Body, and how little he ought to mind the Gratification of the latter, when it standeth in competition with the Advantages of the former. If Man therefore be considered as a deliberative Creature, Commandments of this sort, which teach him to judge rightly, and to choose accordingly, must needs be easy and agreeable ; *God's Commandments are not grievous*. Whether then we reflect upon Man as a sociable Creature, in respect of his Behaviour to others, whether we look upon him as a contemplative Creature, in relation to his Notions of God and Heaven ; or whether we consider him as a deliberative Creature, upon the account of his private Choice of Good and Evil ; that is, whether we examine him in his Duty to God, his Neighbour, or himself (and we cannot possibly conceive him under any other Circumstances) the Precepts of the Gospel are conformable to his Nature, and therefore cannot be looked upon as harsh or uneasy ; the Exercises of Piety are not accompanied with

with any such Difficulty, as is commonly supposed; *The Commandments of God are not grievous.* Serm. XXXI.

BUT lest the present Degeneracy and Corruption of our Nature should seem to exempt us from the Performance of these Duties, which may seem tedious and impracticable to us, in the unhappy Condition to which we are reduced, however agreeable they may be, in themselves, to right Reason and an unprejudiced Understanding; let us therefore consider,

II. IN the second Place, that the Exercises of Piety are neither burthensome nor uneasy, by reason of the great Assistance given us, in order to the Performance of that which is enjoined.

HOWEVER difficult an Attempt may appear, when considered nakedly by it self; yet if at the same time we reflect upon its Circumstances, and find the Helps that are offered to be more available, than the Hardships are terrible which we are to encounter; this is sufficient to make us go on chearfully, and to proceed at once with Ease and Satisfaction: such is the Case of which we are now Discoursing, if after all that hath been said to make out at once the Practicableness

Vol. III. cableness and Pleasure of our Christian
 ~~~~~ Duties, we are still apprehensive of our  
 own Insufficiency; yet we may comfort  
 our selves with this Assurance, *that we  
 can do all Things through him that ena-  
 bleth us*; that we can combat with and  
 overcome the most forcible Opposition;  
 if we will but make use of these two As-  
 sistances, the Example of our Saviour,  
 and the Conduct of his Spirit.

I. THEN the Exercises of Piety will appear  
 practicable and easy, by proposing to our  
 selves the Example of our Saviour; this  
 is one great Assistance given us, in order  
 to the Performance of our Christian Duties.

HOWEVER narrow the Way may seem,  
 however strait the Path may appear; yet  
 is it a great Inducement to our going for-  
 ward, when we are assured that it is not  
 unpassable. Example is generally more  
 prevalent than Precept, it hath an Influ-  
 ence and Power that is almost irresistible;  
 and that natural Principle of Self-love,  
 that good Opinion which People general-  
 ly have of themselves, disposeth them to  
 believe that they may perform what they  
 are convinced that others have gone  
 through with: but chiefly the Example  
 of a Teacher or a Leader doeth most  
 powerfully influence the Learners and the  
 Followers; all things become easy by  
 virtue

virtue of so great a Precedent ; and an Inferior must blush to pretend Uneasiness in any thing when he hath seen his Betters discharge it chearfully. But this was the constant Practice of our Redeemer, the Method which he took to recommend his Doctrines ; he exemplified every one of them in his own Conversation, and gave that Life and Vigour to them by the Energy of his Actions, which they could not have in a dead Injunction : he commanded no more than himself performed ; required us but to follow where himself led the way ; at once directing what we ought to do, and shewing, by his Example, that it might be done : and can any thing be baser than to desert our Colours, and relinquish the great Captain of our Salvation ? Shall we boggle at that which is agreeable to our Nature, and was performed by him who took upon him the Infirmities of it ? Since he, like the first and greatest of the *Cesars*, doeth not command his Soldiers to go, but to come ; since he himself hath led the Way, and taken the first Essay of all Difficulties and Dangers ; since he who was cloathed with all the Weakness of Humanity, hath shewed us what Man is able to accomplish ; since we are not to walk in an unbeaten Track, but have the Example of our Saviour to en-

Serm.  
XXXI.

Vol.III. encourage and direct us ; all things  
 ~~~~~ should be looked upon as easy, nay delightful, which may qualify us to transcribe that divine Original. But lest that Consideration of our Saviour's Divinity should make those things seem difficult and unpleasant to us, which were not so to him, and so the Assistance of that great Example may perhaps appear too weak and insufficient, let us therefore consider,

2. THAT we have another Assistance yet greater than the former, namely, the Guidance and Conduct of the Holy Spirit.

THIS indeed is so considerable a Help, as will let nothing appear uneasy ; through this we are able to perform all Things, however hard and unconquerable they may be in themselves. Whatsoever was wanting in our Nature, of primitive Holiness and Perfection, which may make the Rules of true Religion seem disagreeable and disgustful to us, is by this divine Influence abundantly supplied. In the former Consideration, of our Saviour's Example, God indeed walked before us, and called to us to follow ; but in this he leadeth us by the Hand, and giveth us Motion : he inspireth our Hearts with good Resolutions ; he strengtheneth and confirmeth us in our pious Intentions, giving

ing us Power and Perseverance to act accordingly, and to make our Performances answerable to our Designs. He doeth not only shew us the Way, and prescribe the Path in which we are to walk; but upholdeth us also in our Goings, supporteth and guideth us in our Progress. Since therefore God is so very faithful, that he never exposeth us to any Trial, but that he sustaineth us under the Conflict; since he never suffereth us *to be tempted above that we are able, but with the Temptation maketh a way for us to escape*, that we may be able to bear it; since he always increaseth our Strength, proportionably to the Weight which he layeth upon us; and at all times imparteth the Measure of his Spirit, according to the Occasion which we have to make use of it; no Christian Duties should be thought uneasy, where we have the Advantage of so powerful an Assistance: and these Considerations should suffice to convince us, that the Exercises of Piety are not accompanied with any such Difficulty as is usually imagined, *that God's Commandments are not grievous.*

BUT should we allow that religious Duties carried something with them of Harshness and Uneasiness; though we were also destitute of those great Assistances

Vol. III. ances to facilitate their Practice, our Saviour's Example, and the Operations of his Spirit: yet might we conclude that *God's Commandments are not grievous*, by reason,

III. Of the Vastness of the Rewards annexed to the Performance of all such Duties as are required at our Hands.

THE sharpest Spur to Industry is Reward; and the greatest Hardships and Inconveniences do by the Prospect of Advantage become light and supportable. This maketh the adventurous Merchant expose himself to the Inclemency of Winds and Weather, to the dreadful Hazards of the Deep, and to the furious Shock of contending Elements: This maketh the Toils of War, the Dangers of a Battle, the Rigours of Captivity, and the Smart of Wounds, easy and tolerable to the Soldier: and yet the height of their Attainment is but short-lived Honour, and perishing Riches: But to him who runneth the Race of Godliness, who fighteth the good fight of Faith, and vigorously accomplisheth his Christian Warfare; *an eternal Weight of Glory is appointed, and such Treasures as shall never fail*: for there is no particular Duty, which hath not some Mark of the divine Favour inseparably affixed to the Practice

of it; and the most unpalatable Injunctions of our great Law-giver carry with them sufficient matter of Comfort and Consolation: Thus, if we are commanded to suffer for Righteousness sake, we are assured, that to such belongeth the Kingdom of Heaven; if we are required to mourn, we are withal promised, that we shall be comforted: if our Saviour telleth us, that we must be reviled and persecuted, and have all manner of evil said against us for his Sake; he biddeth us at the same time to rejoice and be exceeding glad, because great is our Reward in Heaven. Thus the severest Dispensations of our heavenly Father are made most desirable, most comfortable, and pleasant, because the Recompence of Reward is proportionably great. And indeed, as it is most certain, that all Impiety is originally founded upon want of Faith; so is the Truth of that Assertion most evidently demonstrated in this Particular: for were we thoroughly persuaded, and effectually convinced, that neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man fully to conceive, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him, and yet that hereby only we know we love him, if we keep his Commandments; did we truly and cordially

F

believe,

Vol. III. believe, that *in his Presence is fulness of Joy*, and yet, that *without Holiness it is impossible to see God*; Obedience and Purity could have nothing in them so difficult or uneasy, as to hinder our Prosecution and Attainment of them, upon the bare account of the Reward which attendeth them. There are, I believe, but few amongst us, who would not be contented to live meanly and retiredly, to fare hardly, and lie coarsely for a few Days, if they were assured thereby to purchase an uninterrupted Life of Happiness and Satisfaction: and yet how small a Proportion doeth our short Span of Days bear, to the endless Ages of Eternity; or worldly Joys, to celestial Enjoyments? we cannot therefore assign any probable Reason, why we should court the one, and reject the other, but because the former is evident to Sense, and the latter the Object of a Faith, which we do not exercise: if we did, all the seeming Difficulties of the Road would never stop us from pressing forward; the Prospect of our Journey's end would make the Passage thither easy and delightful, and a full Assurance of the vastness of the Rewards annexed to the Performances of our Duty, would oblige us to confess, that *God's Commandments are not grievous.*

THUS

THUS have I gone over the general Heads which I propos'd as the Subject of my present Discourses, and have endeavour'd to prove, that the Exercises and Duties of our Christian Profession are not so difficult and impracticable; as People generally imagine them to be; whether we consider the Nature of the Things enjoined, and their conformity with the Nature of Man, as he is a sociable, a contemplative, and a deliberative Creature; or whether we reflect upon the Assistances which are offer'd to us in order to their Performance of our Saviour's Example, and the Operations of his Spirit; or whether we examine the vastness of those Rewards, which are annexed to that Performance; I shall briefly close up all with a Word of Application, and so conclude:

ARE the *Commandments of God* not grievous? Are they so very reasonable, are they so agreeable to human Nature, that we must in a manner cease to be Men, unless we will resolve to be good Christians? And can we refuse our Obedience to them, or look upon such easy Injunctions as toilsome and unpleasant? Are we so proud of our decay of Perfection, and the loss of those Advantages which we first enjoy'd, that we will not endeavour the regaining of them,

Vol. III. by asserting right Reason into its Primitive Jurisdiction, and then being led by the Dictates of it? Shall we neither value the publick Advantages of Society and mutual Commerce, nor the more refined Entertainments of our contemplative Faculties, nor the Improvement of our Judgment, in order to the Regulation of our Appetites and Affections? Shall we, in so great an Undertaking as this, be discouraged by pretended Difficulties, or startled at the Apprehensions of seeming Hardships, coined by our Laziness or our Fear? Can any thing more equitable be expected at our Hands, than that we should rather live like Men than Beasts? that we should not suffer the Servants to become the Master; our Passions to dethrone and debauch our Reason, which was intended to bridle and restrain them? Can any thing be more just, than that the viler Parts of a compounded Being should be subservient to those that are more noble; and that the Advantages of Soul and Spirit should be preferred before bodily Enjoyments? Let us then, in the Name of God, set about to recover what our first Parents lost; there is something of the Man still left within us, to which the divine Precepts cannot but be conformable; every Advance which we
make

make in the Exercise of them, is a Step Serm.
towards the regaining our lost Perfection; XXXI.
if we go on, we shall quite retrieve it,
and shall then find such an exact Agree-
ment between that and the divine In-
junctions, as will convince us of the Ea-
siness and Practicableness of them.

BUT farther, have we, besides their exact Conformity to uncorrupted human Nature, such vast Assistances to enable us to perform them, and can we stop or retire backwards, when it is so easy to advance forwards? Did our Saviour tread this Path before us, and shall we not be fired by so great an Example? Is the Servant greater than the Master; or shall we expect to be exempted, when he himself was not excused? If we want a great President to enliven and invite us, behold a God that leadeth us on; if we desire a familiar Example to hearten and encourage us, behold a Man that goeth before us! But have we not only God to lead us on, but the divine Assistance also to support us in our goings, and can any Way seem rough or tedious, in such desirable and advantageous Company? Shall we rather take Pains to go out of the Way, than easily and safely embrace the Assistance of this our Helper and Conductor? Certainly, they must be sottish-

Vol. III. ly fond of wallowing in the Mire, who will not at least consent to their own Cleansing.

BUT, *Thirdly and Lastly*, Are there besides their Suitableness to our Nature, and the vast Assistances communicated from above, eternal Rewards also annexed to their Performance; and can we think any thing difficult or uneasy, to which the Inducements are so powerful? Are the Recompences everlasting, and can any Difficulties that are but temporal, pretend to stand in Competition with them? Is the Joy of our Lord prepared for us, and can any thing seem hard to be performed by a good and faithful Servant, in order to his entering into it? Is it not better to pluck out a right Eye, than to forfeit our Title to the beatifick Vision? Should we not willingly cut off a right Hand to secure to our selves a Place upon God's, where are *Pleasures for evermore*? Can any Labours in our Journey thither fully the bright Prospect of the heavenly *Canaan*, or hinder us *from pressing forward to that Joy and Delight of all Nations*? Let, I beseech you, all these Considerations prevail upon us speedily and strongly to resolve that we will effectually set about the Performance of our Duty, that we

will

to the sincere Christian.

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will chearfully go on in the Exercises of Piety, and as far as is compatible with the Infirmities of our Nature, will be always conversant in the Service of that God, *whose Commandments are not grievous.*

Serm.
XXXI.



F 4

SERMON

17
SERMON XXXII.

The Way of the Lord how
to be prepared.

ISAIAH XL. Verses 3d and 4th.

*The Voice of him that crieth in the
Wilderness, Prepare ye the Way
of the Lord, make straight in the
Desert a High-way for our God.*

*Every Valley shall be exalted, and
every Mountain and Hill shall be
made low; and the crooked shall be
made straight, and the rough Places
plain.*

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IN the inspired Writings of
this Evangelical Prophet (who
had all the Advantages of Birth
and Education, being a Prince
of the Blood Royal of the Kings of Ju-
dah) we find the noble Loftiness of the
Pro-

Prophetical Stile set off with all the Serm.
Beauties of the Eastern Eloquence; which xxxii.
chiefly consisting in Similitudes and Allu-
sions, by which the highest Speculations
are couched under familiar Resemblan-
ces, we must not therefore, in the Peru-
sal of his Works, take up barely with a
plain and verbal Interpretation; but must
allow them a farther figurative Sense, of
much greater Weight and Moment than
the literal Expression. Thus, for Instance,
we shall find it in that Portion of Scrip-
ture, which I have now made choice of
for your present Entertainment. Where
the Prophet being to foretel the Coming
of the second *Elias*, or *John the Baptist*,
who was to be the Harbinger of the great
Messiah; describeth the Solemnity of his
Appearance, and giveth an Idea of the
Venerableness of his Office, by a Meta-
phor borrowed from the Majesty and
State, which the Monarchs of the East
took upon them in their Progresses: for
with them it was usual, upon any such
Occasion, to send before them an Officer
with a Multitude of Pioneers; whose
Business it was, to make all Places smooth
and level, and to see that the Road was
straight and direct; that so they might
move on in their intended Journey, with-
out any Uneasiness or Obstruction. A-
greeably

Vol. III greceably to this Custom of those haughty Potentares, *John the Baptist* is introduced by an elegant Allegory, giving Orders for the Reception of the Redeemer of Mankind, in a manner that was suitable to his illustrious Quality. *The Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make straight in the Desert a High-way for our God: Every Valley shall be exalted, and every Mountain and Hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough Places plain.* A Description, whose Importance is mystical and spiritual, not having respect to any outward Pomp or Grandeur, which our Saviour, whose Kingdom was not of this World, industriously avoided at his Appearance in it; but which pointeth at that Frame and Disposition of Mind, which is necessarily preparatory to his inward Reception, in the Hearts and Affections of his Disciples and Followers. And therefore to understand their more useful Signification, it may be convenient to comment upon them after the following manner.

WHEN the World was over-run with Infidelity and Immorality; and was thereby become like a desolate Wilderness, which produceth nothing but Briars and Brambles; our blessed Redeemer, in Compassion

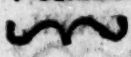
lion to our Wretchedness, vouchsafed to **Serm.**
 enter into this Vale of Misery; but first **XXXII.**
 thought fit to send his Messenger before
 him, to remove those Impediments which
 stood in his Way; *by turning the Hearts*
of the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the
Just, and making ready a People prepared
for the Lord. Now this was to be accom-
 plished, as my Text informeth us:

FIRST, *By exalting every Valley;* by
 lifting up those Thoughts which were
 groveling here beneath, amongst the
 transitory Enjoyments and Vanities of
 this World; to the Contemplation of
 such Things as are above, to the Hope
 and the Pursuit of heavenly Attainments.

SECONDLY, *By bringing down and ma-*
king low every Mountain and Hill; by re-
 pressing all the Swellings of Pride and
 Self-sufficiency, and planting Modesty
 and Humility in their room.

THIRDLY, *By making straight the*
Paths which were crooked; by reclaiming
 Mankind from the Obliquity of their
 Ways, from their unfair Practices and in-
 direct Proceedings; and recommending
 the Exercise of the contrary Virtues, Up-
 rightness, Integrity, and Sincerity.

FOURTHLY, *By plaining those Places*
which were rough; by banishing all Sow-
 erness and Moroseness of Temper, bred
 by

Vol. III. by heathen Philosophy; or Jewish Super-
 cilioufness; and introducing the Christian
 Graces of Meekness and Affability, with
 all the obliging Offices of Humanity and
 Good-nature. This was the Alteration
 which was necessary to be made, these
 were the Dispositions which were to be
 established, in order to prepare the World
 for our Saviour's coming into it; and
 therefore, if we would fit our selves for
 his Reception, at the near approaching
 Festival of his Nativity; if we would
 pass for his Disciples and Followers, and
 enroll our selves amongst the Subjects of
 his Kingdom of Grace here; or if we
 would qualify our selves to receive him
 at his second Coming, and to be Members
 of his Kingdom of Glory hereafter; we
 must put our Souls into such a Frame and
 Posture, as is here particularly required
 at our Hands; *by exalting every Valley,
 making low every Hill; by straightning
 the crooked Paths, and making the rough
 Places plain.*

I. THEN; We must approve our selves
 the Disciples of our blessed Saviour, *by
 exalting every Valley;* by lifting up those
 Thoughts which were groveling here be-
 neath, amongst the transitory Enjoyments
 and Vanities of this World; to the Con-
 templation

how to be prepared.

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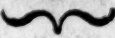
contemplation of such Things as are above, to the Hope and the Pursuit of heavenly Attainments. Sermon XXXII

THE Theology of the Heathens was gross and sensual, and looked not any farther than the Things of this World; excepting some fantastical Notions of a future State, which were broached and spread abroad by some few amongst them; who owned the Immortality of the Soul, and provided for it after Death in a Romanick Manner: not indeed was it at all to be admired, that those who acted merely by the Light of Nature, which was very much clouded and eclipsed by the Fall, should be conversant only about such Objects as were sensible, without raising up themselves to those Things that were spiritual and heavenly. The Jews, it is true, were admitted to a clearer Knowledge of the Nature of God, and the Perfection of his Attributes; but even their Religion and outward Worship seemed chiefly to address themselves to the Senses: whatever was contained in them of a spiritual Nature, being wrapped up in Veils and Types, and Similitudes; through which it was very difficult for ordinary Capacities to discern the sacred Meaning that was shrouded under them: and this was done partly in Compliance with

Vol. III. with the Genius of that People, who were too carnally minded to admit of more exalted Notions; and whose Expectations reached no farther than to an earthly *Canaan, to a Land that flowed with Milk and Honey*: as also because the *Jewish* Oeconomy was only preparatory to the Christian Dispensation; which was designed to abolish those *beggarly Elements*, that constituted the ceremonial Part of the Law; and to establish such elevated, such celestial Maxims, as might improve and spiritualize the moral Duties. By this holy Institution then we stand obliged to disentangle and wean our selves from the gross Incumbrances of this present Life; not to love the World, nor the Things of the World, in comparison, or to the prejudice of more noble Acquisitions; to lift up our Thoughts and our Affections to such Things as are above, and so to anticipate the Joys of a blessed Immortality; by Prayer and Meditation to ascend up into Heaven, and soar to the blessed Regions upon those Wings of the Soul: and since God, who spake formerly to our Fathers, under Allegories and Allusions, by the Prophets, hath now in these latter Days declared his Will to us most clearly and distinctly by the Mouth of his Son; we

I

must,

must therefore comply with these divine Serm.
Lectures, and worship God hencefor- XXXII.
ward *in Spirit, and in Truth*: in Truth, 
in Opposition to the false Notions of the
Heathens; and in Spirit, to distinguish
it from the carnal Service of the *Jews*.
That Disposition then to Things of a spi-
ritual Nature, which inclineth us to aspire
after heavenly Enjoyments; which maketh
us pant after the Society of Saints and
Angels, and the delightful Conversation
of just Men made perfect; which re-
nounceth, in order to the Attainment of
that End, all such Delights as are earthly
and sensual, and purifieth the Soul from
so gross a Mixture; or, to express it in
one Word, the Grace of Heavenly-mind-
edness, is one great Qualification re-
quired in all those, who would duly
prepare the Way of the Lord, which must
be done by *exalting every Valley*. But,

II. WE must approve our selves the
Disciples of our blessed Saviour, by
*bringing down and making low every Moun-
tain and Hill*; by repressing all the
Swellings of Pride and Self-sufficiency,
and planting Modesty and Humility in
their room.

THE *Romans* and the *Grecians*, who,
about our Saviour's Time, had monopol-
ized

Vol. III. lized all the Learning of this Part of the World, did but too much value themselves upon that Distinction; despising all other Nations in comparison of themselves, and stigmatizing them with the odious Title of *Barbarians*: and they must therefore be necessarily averse and indisposed to close with a Religion in which they must sacrifice their darling Pride at the Altar of Humility, and their boasted Reason to Faith and Revelation: The offering up of these was as shocking to them, as the Doctrine of the Cross was to the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; and the former could no more consent to renounce their worldly Wisdom, than the latter to disclaim their Hopes of earthly Grandeur; and both from the same Principle, the Pride of their Hearts, which would assert a Pre-eminence either of Knowledge, or of Power. This made the *Stoicks* and *Epicureans* to pronounce St. Paul a Babbler, when he disputed with them at *Athens*; and so grossly to mistake the Tendency of his Discourse, as to misconstrue his mentioning our Saviour and his Resurrection, for the preaching up of strange Gods, called *Jesus* and *Anastasis*. This made the Rulers of the Synagogue reflect with Contempt upon Christ crucified, and upon the Meanness of his Appearance

pearance when he came into the World ; *Serm.*
instead of that glorious Prince which they *XXXII.*
had figured to themselves; who should
rescue them from the Yoke of their *Roman* Masters : and thus, through the Pride
and Vanity of both Parties, the Christian
Religion became *a Stumbling-block to the*
Jews, as well as Foolishness to the Greeks
and Gentiles : But notwithstanding their
gross Misconceptions of it, to those who
are cloathed with the opposite Virtue, it
will not fail to manifest and approve it
self, *to be the Wisdom of God and the*
Power of God. For Humility is that pro-
per Cultivation of the Soul, which pre-
pareth it for the Reception of the good
Seed of the Gospel, in order to its produ-
cing a manifold Increase. He that would
benefit by a Saviour and a Redeemer,
must be sensible that he standeth in need
of such a Benefactor, and must conse-
quently recognize his own Vileness and
Infirmities : He must be conscious how
far distant he is from being whole, be-
fore he will earnestly enough apply him-
self to a Physician; and must quit all
Reliance upon his own Self-sufficiency,
if he design to partake of the All-suffi-
ciency of God. Pride it was that in-
fected the glorified Angels, and our first
unhappy Parents in the State of Innocence;
G and

Vol. III. and since the Design of our Saviour's
Coming was to fill up the Room of those
fallen Spirits, and to restore human Nature to its Original Happiness; what can better expel the Poison that envenomed it, than the happy Antidote of the contrary Virtue? This will most faithfully represent us to our selves, so undeserving of those Mercies which the Gospel conveyeth to us; that it will make our Hearts overflow with Love and Gratitude, till nothing will seem too hard to us for the expressing our Acknowledgments. This Christian Humility, like *Jacob's Ladder*, hath one End upon the Earth in the Abasement of our selves, but the other End in Heaven in our Reliance upon God; while Man securely reposeth at the Bottom, God standeth at the Top to protect and defend him; and the Angels continually, as ministring Spirits, are ascending and descending to propitiate for him, and assist him. For God who declareth that he will resist the Proud, hath promised to impart his Grace to the Humble; and his Grace alone it is which can make us capable of being directed by his Son, and influenced by his Spirit. This humble, this resigned Temper then of Mind, which rendereth us unworthy in our own Conceit, and there-

thereby spurreth us on to aim at greater Serm. Perfection; is a second Qualification expected at their Hands, who would duly *prepare the Way of the Lord*, which must be done by *making low every Mountain and Hill.* But, XXXII.

III. We must approve our selves the Disciples of our blessed Saviour, by *making straight the Paths which were crooked*; by reclaiming our selves from the Obliviousness of our Ways, from our unfair Practices and indirect Proceedings; and by employing our selves in the Exercise of the contrary Virtues, Uprightness, Integrity, and Sincerity.

THE Devil, who *was a Lyar from the Beginning*, and who baited his first Temptation with a Lye; was fain afterwards to have recourse to the same Expedient, for carrying on those gross and palpable Cheats, with which he deluded his idolatrous Worshippers; and it was therefore no wonder that those who were his Followers, should be tainted universally with this execrable Vice. What Shifts and Impostures were his Priests reduced to, to colour or conceal the Weakness of their Deities, and shroud their Inabilities from the Eyes of the Vulgar? Let the Priests of *Bel* be produced as an

Vol.III. Instance, who by private Passages entred
 ~~~~~ into his Temple, and devoured the Pro-  
 visions that were set before him, to per-  
 suade the deluded People that they were  
 consumed by him. Let us also inspect  
 into the Pagan Oracles, which were so  
 many Pieces of religious Sophistry; being  
 calculated to puzzle the ignorant Consul-  
 ters, and to come off at last under the  
 Shelter of an ambiguous Meaning. Their  
 whole Scheme of Worship indeed was  
 but a Delusion, and promoted by all the  
 Methods of Cunning and Design: and  
 therefore their Votaries thought not  
 themselves obliged to manage their Af-  
 fairs by the strict Rules of Honesty; but  
 indulged themselves in the Liberty of  
 Tricking and Dissembling, and compas-  
 sing their Ends by any Arts of Falshood.  
 The Religion of the *Jews*, though insti-  
 tuted by God himself, was so sadly cor-  
 rupted by Traditions, and perplexed  
 with the different Expositions of their  
 Rabbies; that their Devotion was grown  
 to be only outside, and the Power of  
 Godliness was lost in the Form it: It is  
 true, they enlarged their Phylacteries,  
 and made long Prayers, but at the same  
 time they devoured *Widows Houses*;  
*they tithed indeed Mint, and Anise, and*  
*Cummin, but neglected the weightier Mat-*  
 ters

*ters of the Law*: thus their Pretensions were contradicted by their Practices; and intitled them only to the Character of Hypocrites, with which they are so often branded by our blessed Saviour. But he set his Followers another sort of Example, a Pattern of the most candid Sincerity and Truth. His Doctrine alloweth of no pious Frauds, though in order to procure the greatest Advantages; and nothing is more hateful in his Eyes, than a double Tongue and a double Heart. A Christian is obliged by his holy Profession to make his Words agreeable to his Thoughts, and to suit his Actions to them both: He is not permitted to disguise or palliate his own Faults, or others, by a useful Lye; but must stick to the sound Principles of Simplicity and Truth, let the Consequence of it be what it will: He hath a Rule to go by, from which he must not deviate; a direct Path assigned him, in which he must walk forwards, without venturing to stray into the Mazes of Falshood, which are very difficult to be trod back again: His Countenance should always be the Index of his Heart, he should never put on a Vizard to deceive with; but must appear to all the World the Man he really is, the same that he doeth to God who seeth in secret: He

Serm.  
XXXII.

Vol. III. must neither be bribed nor frightened from his Integrity, by temporal Advantages, or worldly Inconveniences; as knowing that Truth is too precious a Jewel to be parted with for any outward Consideration whatsoever. This constant Integrity then and Sincerity of Soul, which maketh a Man proceed in his Christian Course without wavering, or counterfeiting, or stepping aside, is a third Qualification expected of those, who would duly *prepare the Way of the Lord*; which must be done by *straightning the crooked Paths*. But,

IV. WE must approve our selves the Followers of our blessed Saviour, by *plaining those Places which are rough*; by banishing all Sowerness and Moroseness of Temper, bred by Heathen Philosophy, or *Jewish* Superciliousness; and introducing the Christian Graces of Meekness and Affability, with all the obliging Offices of Humanity and Good-nature.

ONE would wonder how human Nature could be so far depraved, as to comply with those inhuman and bloody Maxims, which were universally established in the Times of Paganism; to make Cruelty and Revenge not only pass for Bravery, but even for a Part of Religion too: Such

was



was the furious Zeal of those who sacrificed Men to their otherwise implacable Divinities; and the very extinguishing of all natural Compassion, by the offering of their Sons and Daughters unto Devils. And when this had once gained Ground amongst them, there is no farther room left for us to admire, that their Tempers should be rendered barbarous and savage, and that Pity and Tenderneſs should be banished from amongst them: If their Deities were delighted with such dreadful Oblations, their Worshippers could not but derive from them a Fierceness which they could never think inexcusable, whilst it was patronized by the Authority of such venerable Examples. It pleased God also for the great Ends of his Providence, in order to extirpate those sinful Nations, who had filled up the Measure of their Iniquity; to permit the *Jews* to be actuated with violent Principles, in relation to those Countries which they conquered; and to use all those Severities against their Captives, which an unbounded Rage could prompt them to execute. The old Axiom among them, of loving their Friends, was balanced by the Counterpoise of hating their Enemies; and they thought they were no more to be valued for the former, than they were

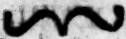
Vol.III. excusable at least in practising the latter.

But when Christ made his Appearance in this World, those Things which God winked at before were to be reformed: The Practices of the Heathens were to be utterly abolished, and the Notions of the *Jews* to be improved and christianized. That universal Principle of Good-nature, which is the Foundation of all Virtues, was to be substituted in the Place of heathenish Ferocity, and *Jewish* Singularity. And as the Church of God was no more to be confined to one People, but to be the Joy and Delight of all the Earth; so the contracted Affections of Men were to be enlarged, and to have a Sphere of Action as wide as the Universe. For Christianity is a Religion that teacheth us the best Nature and the best Manners; and they who would lift themselves under the Banner of our Saviour, must learn from him to do Good to all Men, and to treat all Mankind as their Brethren in Christ. And indeed there is something so engaging in this Practice, as may forcibly persuade us to be conversant in it. A good-natured Man is a general Blessing; and never findeth himself entirely satisfied, but when he seeth all others as easy as himself: when he converseth with Persons of his own Frame and Temper, he

is

is possessed of a Contentment, like that Serm. XXXII.  
of those, who compose the Body of the Church Triumphant, and live in perfect  
Unity and Tranquillity: If he is unhappily exposed to the bad Usage of the Ill-natured, he pitieth and loveth them notwithstanding, and is more concerned for them than for himself: In short, as an ill-natured Man degenerateth from his Rank, and sinketh down in some measure into a State of Brutality; so a good-natured Person advanceth his Character, and approacheth very near to the Condition of an Angel. But Christianity doth not only teach us good Nature, but aimeth to implant good Breeding in us also. Good Breeding consisteth not in Ceremony or Fashion, but in behaving our selves so inoffensively, as to give no Disgust to those with whom we converse; for thus the Apostolical Precept runneth, *Give none Offence, neither to the Jews, nor Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.* And as a good Christian must thus avoid giving all Offence, so must he be as backward as is possible in taking it; when he is reviled, he must not revile again, but *commit himself to God, who judgeth righteously.* This Dove-like Quality then of Meekness is another indispenfible Qualification, which is necessarily required of all those,



Vol. III. those, who would duly *prepare the Way*  
 *of the Lord*; which must be done by  
*making the rough Places plain.*

And now we have seen a short imperfect Draught of what Men were before the great Work of Redemption, and what they are or should be after it. Their Affections formerly were tied to this World, and weighed down to this dull Center of Corruption; whereas now they must be raised above this sublunary Globe, and fixed upon the Hopes of celestial Enjoyments. Then they were puffed up with proud Imaginations, and foolishly transported with the Conceit of their own Perfections; whereas now they must put on the Christian Dress of Humility, and disclaim all Pretences to meritorious Performances. Before they were addicted to Fraud and Dissimulation, and their fairest Appearance was but a specious Hypocrisy; whereas now they are to practise the most exact Sincerity, and deal with one another with Simplicity and Integrity. Then they were inclined to Cruelty of Disposition, and Roughness of Behaviour in their common Transactions; whereas now they are required to be gentle and tractable, obliging and good-natured in their mutual Conversation. Let us then avoid the former Practices,  
and

and readily and thoroughly comply with Sermon.  
the latter; that so we may be owned by XXXII.  
our Lord and Master, when he shall  
come to Judgment with his holy Angels;  
and may receive the Commendation of good  
and faithful Servants, and be qualified  
for entering into the Joy of our Lord.

*To God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might,  
Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and  
for evermore. Amen.*



SERMON



## SERMON XXXIII.

Making Provision for the  
Flesh inconsistent with  
putting on Christ.

---

R o m. xiii. the last Verse.

*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ ; and  
make not Provision for the Flesh, to  
fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

Vol.III.



HE Incarnation of the Eter-  
nal Word, and the happy U-  
nion of God and Man, is a  
Blessing of such great and con-  
siderable Importance; that the  
pious Gratitude of our Church would  
not



not confine the Commemoration of it to *Serm.*  
the single Day of our Saviour's Nativity, *XXXIII.*  
or to those twelve only, which are generally known by the Name of *Christmas*; but hath devoutly set apart some preceding Sundays, as introductory and preparatory to the due Solemnization of that great Festival. And indeed if we are affected, as we ought, with the comfortable Influence of *this Sun of Righteousness, which ariseth upon us with healing under his Wings*: if we will but consider and make a just Estimate of the vastness of those Benefits which are imparted to us by our Saviour's Advent, or coming in the Flesh; we shall find our selves obliged most powerfully and convincingly to make all possible Returns of Gratitude and Acknowledgment; we shall not think it too early an Employment to prepare for his Reception some few Weeks before hand; or to put our Hearts into such a Frame and Posture, as may best express the Welcome we should give him: To wear his Colours, and dress our selves up in his Livery, by *putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*; and to renounce all Commerce with his professed Enemies, by *not making Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

**VOL. III.** THE Apostle here giveth us too distinct Rules, for the due Regulation of our Actions: the one in relation to what we should practise, the other in respect of what we should avoid: I shall therefore in my following Discourse make use of his Method, and insist upon these two Propositions:

**I. I SHALL** exhort you to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*; and,

**II. I SHALL** dissuade you from *making Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof*,

**I. THEN, I SHALL** exhort you to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.

THIS Expression is Figurative and Metaphorical, borrowed from the Dress and Habit of the Body, and thence applied to the Form and Temper of the Mind. And therefore by it thus much is meant, that we should endeavour to be conversant in all Christian Graces; to conform our selves to the Likeness of our Saviour; to adorn our Souls after his Resemblance; to transcribe his Actions in our Lives and Conversations, and carefully to copy out that divine Original: This is the full Meaning of the Expression in my Text, that we should *put on*  
the

*the Lord Jesus Christ*, a Duty at all times Serm. XXXIII.  
indispensibly necessary, and the peculiar  
Characteristick of our Christian Profes-  
sion; but which at some times we are re-  
quired to exercise more eminently, and  
chiefly upon so solemn an Occasion as this;  
when we are preparing to meet him at the  
Festival of his Nativity: for the chief  
Design of our Saviour's coming into the  
World having been to make us Followers  
of himself, and *to purify to himself a  
peculiar People zealous of good Works*; we  
cannot more properly express our Thanks  
to him for so great a Benefit; we cannot  
better dispose our selves to welcome him  
into the World, than by chearfully com-  
plying with those gracious Intentions, by  
following his Example, and laying hold  
of his Assistance; by imitating the great  
Pattern which he hath set before us, and  
*purifying our selves even as he is pure.*  
He hath put on us, our Flesh, our Na-  
ture, our Infirmities; and by so doing,  
hath degraded himself in a most won-  
derful manner; and shall we refuse in  
our turn to put on him, to be cloathed  
with his Image of Piety and Holiness,  
which will elevate and advance us to  
greater Honour? But that we may most  
usefully employ our Meditations, let us  
distinctly take Notice of such particular  
Duties, as are chiefly to be practised upon  
I
this



Vol.III. this Occasion ; let us enquire what Christian Graces were most eminently exercised by our blessed Saviour at his Coming into the World ; and consider how forcibly that great Example should engage us to the present Practice of them, for the due Observation of the approaching Solemnity.

I. THE first of these, which was most signally remarkable in the Nativity of our Saviour, and which must consequently be imitated by us, in order to our putting on the Lord Jesus Christ ; was his wonderful Humility and Condescension.

FOR God to take Flesh upon him for our sakes, was a Humiliation of so amazing a Nature, that to endeavour to express it were to set bounds to Infinity : The Royal Psalmist giveth us his Opinion of the whole Race of Mankind collectively taken, *that every Man living is altogether Vanity* : yet for a Condition thus vile and despicable, did the eternal Majesty of Heaven and Earth exchange his State of unconceivable Happiness ; and he, *who was the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Omnipotence*, was contented to be clothed with Weakness and Infirmary. Had he only taken upon him the Vileness of our Nature,

Nature, though set off by all the Pomp and Power of this World, had he been born the Son of some universal Emperor, and appeared in as great Grandeur and outward Splendour, as the mistaken *Jews* expected he would have done; yet had this Condition been infinitely disproportionable to the Glory which he quitted in the Bosom of his Father, and had been much less (if compared to that) than a drop of the Bucket to the Waters of the Ocean. But as if this unconceivable Condescension were not enough, he did not only submit to be like the generality of Mankind in the Infirmary of their Nature; but conformed himself to the meanest of them, by the Poverty of his Condition, and by the Despicableness of his Appearance in the World: he was contented to be the Son of mean and indigent Parents, to be ushered into the World in a Manger and a Stable, with all the Circumstances of Want and Necessity: and this was a Humility of so astonishing a Nature, that human Reason is lost in the Contemplation of it; and the Angels themselves gaze and admire, but are not able to comprehend it. Shall he then, who was absolute Perfection, become thus humble and condescending? and shall we, who are nothing but Filth

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and

Vol.III. and Corruption, pretend to exalt and magnify our selves? Did God thus debase himself, and shall Man be puffed up? How easy is it for us to exercise Humility, who have no reasonable Inducements to think highly of our selves? especially when we find it so signally exerted by him, in whom all Worth was absolutely comprized? What though we were created but little lower than the Angels, shall that make us think too proudly of our selves? We see him, to whom those glorious Creatures are but ministering Spirits; to whom a Name is given above all Names, *that at the Name of Jesus every Knee must bow*; give the greatest Instances of Lowliness and Humility. Do we value our selves, because the Son of God hath taken our Nature upon him? we ought to do so indeed, because the Honour is extraordinary: but let us consider at the same time, that this will but make us more despicable and miserable, unless we conform our selves to his Likeness, as he conformed himself to ours; and he, we know, was meek and lowly in Heart. These and such like Considerations, if we press them home to our Souls warmly and affectionately, will certainly defend us against Pride and Self-conceitedness, will beat down all lofty  
Opi-



Opinions of our selves, and will utterly disarm us of all Vanity and Presumption; and that, by setting before our Eyes that great Example of Humility which our Saviour gave us, when he was contented to take Flesh upon him for our sakes.

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2. ANOTHER of those Christian Graces, which was eminently remarkable in our Saviour's Nativity; and which must consequently be imitated by us, in order to our putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; was the height and the extent of his Love and Charity.

MEN may sometimes be wrought upon, by a subtil fetch of Policy and Design, to part with Advantages they enjoy at present, in hopes of greater in reversion: but our blessed Saviour had no such Inducement for his quitting all the Glory he stood possessed of, and taking upon him a State of Meanness and Insufficiency; his only Motive was his Love to Mankind, a tender Concern for the Good of his Creatures, and the Yearning of his Bowels towards their future Welfare: He had no by-ends of his own to carry on, no private Interest to promote; he enjoyed all things valuable in their most absolute Perfection; and being possessed of infinite Happiness, could propose to himself no Improvement of it: it was

Vol.III. only for our sakes, that he was contented  
to forego those ineffable Delights, and  
to enter upon this Stage of Misery and  
Sorrow: His only Aim was to communi-  
cate a due Share of his own Happiness  
to us; and his Intention in taking our  
Vileness upon him, was to sanctify and  
exalt it above its primitive Dignity, to a  
Participation of his own essential Bles-  
sedness. And as his Love was thus great  
and wonderful in its Degree, so also was  
it in its Largeness and Extent: It was not  
restrained, as in the first Covenant, to one  
particular Nation of the Earth, to the  
utter Exclusion of all others; but was  
as diffusive as Mankind it self, and had  
no other Bounds but those of the Uni-  
verse: His Enemies, the most averse and  
contrary to him, were made capable of  
the Refreshings of the divine Goodness;  
and those *who sate in Darkeness and in  
the Shadow of Death, were visited by this  
Day-spring from on high, to guide their  
Feet into the Ways of Peace*; and as no-  
thing could exceed the Greatness of his  
Love, so neither could any thing limit  
or confine it. Shall Christ then express  
to us so astonishing a Love, and shall we  
pretend to be his Followers, and call our  
selves after his venerable Name; without  
endeavouring to resemble him in this im-  
portant

portant Character ; by exercising both Serm. XXXIII.  
 Branches of the great Duty of Charity, whether in relation to God, or to our  
 Neighbour ? The most natural and rea-  
 sonable Return that can be made for Love,  
 is to pay it in kind ; and thus the beloved  
 Disciple informeth us, when he telleth us,  
*That we love God, because he first loved us:*  
 and therefore when we consider the great  
 Love of God to us, in taking Flesh upon  
 him for our sakes ; it will oblige us to love  
 him, to attempt to be like to him, and  
 consequently to *become perfect even as he is*  
*perfect.* Another Influence which it  
 ought to have upon us, is the making  
 us to *love our Neighbours as our selves ;*  
*Beloved,* saith the same Apostle, *if God*  
*so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*  
 For can we be thought to be thoroughly  
 affected with a due Contemplation of our  
 Saviour's Love to us ; if we will not ex-  
 emplify it in our own dealing with those  
 that are his and our Brethren by Adop-  
 tion and Redemption ? *He that saith*  
*he loveth God, and hateth his Brother, is a*  
*Liar ;* if he loved his Saviour, he would  
 follow his Example, and would like him  
 have an extensive Charity for all Men.  
 For none can possibly have offended us  
 so highly, none can be so undeserving of  
 our Favour and Affection, as we were of  
 H 3 God's,



Vol.III. God's, when he expressed his Love to us after so wonderful a Manner: and therefore whatever Provocations we may have received, however rude and uncharitable we may have experienced some, however mean and despicable we may imagine others; yet ought our Love and Charity to be extended to them all, in a Degree as high as we are capable of, and that in consideration of the great and universal Love which our Saviour testified to all Mankind, when he was contented to take Flesh upon him for our sakes. But,

3. ANOTHER of those Christian Graces, which was eminently remarkable in our Saviour's Nativity, and which consequently must be imitated by us, in order to our putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, was his unblemished Preservation of Holiness and Purity.

THOUGH our Saviour was allied to all the Infirmities of our Nature, yet was he wholly a Stranger to the Uncleanesses of it; and the Purity of his Being was no more soiled by lodging so meanly, than the Beams of the Sun are by shining upon a Dunghill: and therefore, though he did not abhor the Womb of a Woman, when he took upon him to deliver Man, yet he chose that of an undefiled Virgin; that so he might enter upon our Na-

Nature, without being liable to the Corruptions of it: Thus the *Dew of his Birth was of the Womb of the Morning*, and breathed forth nothing but Health and Freshness. We come into the World with vitious Inclinations; and the Original Guilt of our first Parents is transmitted to us through the Loins of his numerous Posterity: but the Incarnation of our Saviour was pure and holy, performed by the Influence of the divine Spirit, and not sullied with the least Tincture of Impurity: He was intended for a Pattern of unblemished Conversation, the great Example of Purity and Holiness; and answerable to his Design of living in the World, was the Manner and Method of his coming into it; and therefore the Angel stileth him in his Message to the Virgin, *that Holy Thing that shall be born of her*. This was one Attribute of his Divinity, which he never suffered to be separated from him; when his uncontroulable Omnipotence was shrouded under Weakness, when his divine Majesty was eclipsed under a Veil of Flesh, when his endless Eternity seemed to be exchanged for a short Span of Days, when his boundless Infinity appeared shrunk to our narrow Dimensions; yet still his immaculate Holiness stuck

Vol. III, close to him in all these Alterations; he never divested himself of his unspotted Purity, but always kept up that great Name and Character, *The Lord our Righteousness*. Shall we then, who profess ourselves his Servants and Followers, dare to appear before his Presence without this inseparable Badge of our Profession? They are the pure in Heart which shall see God; his Eyes will not behold the Thing that is unclean, in vain then shall we present our selves in his Sight, without this indispenfible Qualification. Hath Christ then purified our Nature for us, and shall we not consent to our own Cleansing? Shall we return, like the Sow that was washed, *to our wallowing in the Mire*? and gain no other Advantage by our being cleansed formerly, but to make our future Spots more remarkable, and more provoking? It is certainly our Duty and our Interest, to avoid all Uncleannefs both of *Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*; and that in Contemplation of our Saviour's great Purity, when he was contented to take Flesh upon him for our sakes.

THESE then, to insist upon no more at present, are three of those most Christian Graces, which were eminently exercised by our blessed Saviour, at his happy entrance



trance into this World ; a deep Humility, an extensive Charity, and an unspotted Purity : and these therefore are those, with which we ought to adorn and set off our Souls, in order to a suitable Reception of him, at the great approaching Festival of his Coming in the Flesh ; this is the Dress which we should appear in ; and by which we shall comply with the Advice of the Apostle, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* And thus much shall suffice for the first General of my Text, an Exhortation to a Duty to be performed, *That we should put on the Lord Jesus Christ.* I proceed,

II. To dissuade you from that which you ought to avoid ; namely, *the making Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

AND here we must not presently imagine, that all manner of Provision for the Flesh is interdicted ; for *no Man ever hated his own Flesh* ; and consequently to forbid us to provide for it, would be to strike at the Root and Foundation of Humanity, and to contradict the very Principles of our Nature : But God requireth nothing of us that is inconsistent with that ; and therefore we must consider, that the Provision which we are here prohibited to make for it, is that which

Vol.III. is in order *to fulfil the Lusts thereof.* The

~ Necessities of our Flesh we are commanded to supply, the Conveniences and Satisfactions of it we are allowed also moderately to consult; but its irregular and disorderly Affections, its unruly and extravagant Appetites, these we must restrain and curb incessantly, we must make no manner of Provision for them. In short, *all Provision for the Flesh*, which is consistent with *our putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*, may be made by us very lawfully; but whatever shocketh or is opposite to that, must wholly be avoided and disclaimed by us.

I HAVE, in the former part of my Discourse, restrained this Habit of Mind, which resembleth us to Christ, to those three special Graces which I have been insisting upon, Humility, Charity, and Purity: that therefore this Discourse may be all of a Piece, I shall examine how far a Provision for the Flesh may consist with these three Christian Virtues; for so far we may provide for it, and no farther.

I. WE must not *make Provision for the Flesh* after such a manner, as may shock our Humility; for that is *to fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

IF we indulge our selves in Superfluities and Extravagancies, if we suffer our selves

selves with *Jeshurun* to wax fat and kick; Sermon.  
 if we heap up Wealth to minister Fuel XXXIII.  
 to our Vanity; if we put our Trust in  
 uncertain Riches, till we are tempted to  
 say, *Who is the Lord?* If we are anx-  
 ious and solicitous in providing for the  
 Flesh, till we arrive at the Iniquity of  
*Sodom, Pride, Fullness of Bread, and a-*  
*bundance of Idleness:* If we are not con-  
 tented to live suitably to the Condition in  
 which God hath placed us, and to main-  
 tain a decent Port according to our Qua-  
 lity; but stretch our selves too far beyond  
 the Bounds of our Abilities, or exceed  
 the Limits of a becoming Modesty: This  
 is a *making Provision for the Flesh*, in  
 order to fulfil the Lusts thereof; and is di-  
 rectly contrary to the great Duty enjoined,  
*of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*, whose  
 Example teacheth us to be *cloathed with*  
*Humility.* But if we avoid all Excesses  
 of this inordinate Nature, and keep our  
 selves within the Rules of Decency and  
 Moderation; if our Prosperity doth not  
 puff us up, nor the affluence of good  
 Things make us despise those that want  
 them; if we use them with Gratitude  
 and Discretion, thankfully looking up to  
 the Hand that gave them; if we can be  
 poor in Spirit in the midst of Riches,  
 and preserve an humble Mind under a  
 wealthy



Vol. III. wealthy Outside: then may we *rejoice in the Fruit of our Hands*, and *make our Soul enjoy good in our Labour*, without any danger of offending against this Precept, which enjoineth us *not to make Provision for the Flesh*: For God is the God of Order, not of Confusion; and as he hath placed us in several Ranks and Degrees in this World; so doeth he allow us, according to them, to make a different Figure and Appearance in it: the Prince and the Peasant, the rich Man and the Beggar, must not be supposed to fare alike; and that may be Pride and Vanity in the one, which is but an allowable Piece of Grandeur in the other: But as to the Habit of the Mind, God, who in that Case is no Respector of Persons, expecteth they should all be decked after the same Fashion: Humility towards him is as much expected from the highest as the lowest, nay rather more; since much Gratitude and Respect will be expected of him to whom much hath been imparted. The first Rule therefore, for regulating duly our Provision for the Flesh, is to make it after such a Manner, as may not at all intrench upon our Humility; he who transgresseth this Rule and Boundary, doeth so *make Provision for the Flesh, as to fulfil the Lusts thereof*. But,

2. *We must not make Provision for the* **Serm.**  
*Flesh* after such a Manner, as may shock **XXXIII**  
*our Charity; for that is to fulfil the Lusts*  
*thereof.* ~~~~~

If we make our Expences so great upon our selves, as thereby to hinder us from being helpful to others; if we rather supply our own Extravagancies, than administer Relief to the Necessities of our Brethren; if all our Thoughts and Affections are contracted within the narrow Sphere of Self-love and Self-Interest; if we think we can never gather enough for our selves, and yet care not how little we impart to any else; if we would rather see a poor Man starve, than lessen the Plenty of a Meal to refresh his hungry Soul; if like the Rich Man in the Gospel, *we cloath our selves in Purple and fine Linnen, and fare deliciously every day;* and yet scarce afford poor Lazarus that lieth at the Gate, so much as the *Crumbs that fall from our Tables;* if we suffer our Fondness for the Things of this World, to juggle out or swallow up the Love which we owe to God or to our Neighbour; if we neither *deal out our Bread to the Hungry, nor our Drink to the Thirsty;* but live as if we were born for our selves alone, and have no other End in gathering together, but  
what

Vol.III. what is selfish and reserved : This is a  
 *making Provision for the Flesh*, in order  
*to fulfil the Lusts thereof* ; and is directly  
 opposite to the Duty required, *of putting*  
*on the Lord Jesus Christ*, whose Example  
 teacheth us to abound in Charity. But if,  
 on the contrary, we are charitable and  
 communicative ; if we never turn away  
 our Face from any poor Man, but ma-  
 nage our Revenues as Stewards of the  
 Lord ; if our Barns are but so many Gra-  
 naries for the Needy, and our Treasures  
 are laid out upon a Reversion hereafter ;  
 if we are willing to take God for our  
 Paymaster, and to lend unto the Lord by  
 giving to the Poor ; if our Hearts are as  
 large as our Fortunes are plentiful, and  
 grow more and more open according as  
 they increase ; if we only gather up, that  
 we may the better distribute ; and make  
 such use of our earthly Riches, as thereby to  
 purchase Treasure in Heaven ; if we love  
 God the more, the more we receive from  
 him, and are willing to express it by shew-  
 ing Mercy to his Creatures : then will our  
 Abundance be truly a Blessing ; and God  
 will *put Gladness in our Hearts, when our*  
*Corn and our Wine and our Oyl increase* ;  
 and we may with Comfort make use of  
 such Advantages, without any danger of  
 breaking that Injunction, which requi-  
 reth



reth us *not to make Provision for the Flesh.* Sermon.

XXXIII.

For God hath not appointed us to convey his Blessings to others, without having any Taste or Relish of them our selves; Charity is allowed to begin at home; and Justice as well as that, obligeth us to provide for the Comforts and Conveniences of our selves and Families; we must indeed cut off whatever can be well spared, that so our unnecessary Superfluities may be useful to supply the Necessities of others; but God expecteth not that we should too far incommode our selves, upon a Pretence of being charitable to others: But few are apt to err upon this hand, and the Failure on the other side is more usual and dangerous. The second Rule therefore for regulating duly our Provision for the Flesh, is to make it after such a manner, as that it may not in the least entrench upon our Charity; he who goeth beyond these Limits, doeth so *make Provision for the Flesh*, as to *fulfil the Lusts thereof*. But,

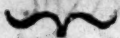
3. WE must not *make Provision for the Flesh*, after such a Manner, as may shock our Purity; for this is *to fulfil the Lusts thereof*.

AND this indeed is the most genuine and natural Meaning of the Words, in their most common and usual Acceptation;

Vbl.III. *tation; the Lusts of the Flesh* being generally made use of to express such vitious Inclinations and Desires, as are inconsistent with Purity and Holiness: and therefore most especially in relation to these, the Caution is given us by the Apostle, *That we should not make Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.* If then we pamper our Bodies till we make them grow wanton; if we let loose the Reins to sensual Enjoyments, and give a full Scope to our carnal Appetites; if we exceed the firm Bounds of Chastity and Sobriety, giving ourselves up to Looseness and Intemperance; if we indulge our selves *in chambering and wantonness, in rioting and drunkenness,* and become the Slaves of our Passions, or our Vices; if we suffer the Flesh to grow too powerful for the Spirit, and do not subdue and keep it under; if we give the Head to our inferior Faculties, and let them lord it over those that were designed to restrain them; or indeed, if we neglect to mortify them when they grow rampant, or to bring them into subjection when they mutiny and rebel: This is a *making Provision for the Flesh,* in order to *fulfil the Lusts thereof;* and is directly contrary to the Duty enjoined, *of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Example teacheth*

teacheth us to be eminent in Purity. But Serm. if, on the other side, we only take so much <sup>XXXIII.</sup> care of the Flesh, as may keep it useful and serviceable to the Spirit; if we only preserve it in a healthful Posture, that it may be able to go through with its own Share of Duty; if we only cherish it as a good Subject, and not countenance or abet it as an insolent Rebel; if we use it like the Body of a rational Creature, which must be subservient to the Dictates of Reason; and suffer it not to degenerate into a Brute, by having no other guidance but that of Passion and Appetite; in a word, if we keep our Bodies in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity: We may always allow them such needful Refreshments, as may make our Lives comfortable and agreeable to us; without any danger of infringing that Precept, which requireth us *not to make Provision for the Flesh.* For God hath not created us Stocks or Stones, but Men; such Creatures as are sensible of Pain and Pleasure; and those natural Inclinations which he hath given to us, were designed to be gratified in some Measure; we may afford them moderate and reasonable Refreshments, but we must take care that we be not excessive in them; otherwise if we pass the Bounds prescribed to us by Reason and Religion, we shall



Vol. III.  run into nothing but Madness and Extravagance: and this is the third Rule, for regulating duly our Provision for the Flesh; to make it after such a manner, as that it may in no wise blemish our Purity; he who doeth not govern himself by this Method, doeth so *make Provision for the Flesh*, as to fulfil the Lusts thereof. Thus have you been shewn, according to the Sentiments of the Apostle, in order to prepare you against the time cometh, the truest way of keeping Christmases, which doeth not consist in extravagant Jollity, disorderly Expences, and unchristian Excesses; but in the Exercise of those Graces which resemble us to our Saviour; and in the avoiding all such *Provision for the Flesh*, as may be inconsistent with our Imitation of him.

THIS whole Discourse having been entirely practical, it standeth in no need of an Application; I shall therefore conclude with a Word or two, in respect of its Suitableness to the present Occasion. As these three Graces are at all times necessary, particularly to fit us for so great a Solemnity, as that of the Incarnation of our blessed Saviour; as they are at all times very instrumental, to set Bounds to our sensual and inordinate Appetites; so are they never more proper or more indispensibly required, than

than when we are about to partake of Serm.  
those blessed Elements, which now wait XXXIII.  
for our Reception. For can any thing  
more effectually persuade us to the Exer-  
cise of Humility, than a serious Recog-  
nition of our own Vileness; which nail-  
ed our blessed Saviour to the accursed  
Tree, and made him subject to the Ago-  
nies of a cruel Death? Can any thing be  
more likely to advance our Charity, than  
that great Example of the highest Love;  
a crucified Saviour, a dying Redeemer,  
the Lamb of God sacrificed for the Sins  
of the World? Can any thing be more  
proper to secure our Purity, than the  
Consideration that we are about to be  
united with him who is Holiness in its  
most absolute Perfection? This is, as it  
were, another coming of our Saviour in-  
to the Flesh, a second Union of God and  
Man; when the eternal Son of the ever-  
lasting Father is, by a Faith that is live-  
ly and operative, incorporated with us  
miserable Sinners. Let us then endea-  
vour to fit our selves for so blessed a Re-  
past, by confirming our selves in the Ex-  
ercise of these Duties: that so by *ma-*  
*king no other Provision for the Flesh,* but  
what is consistent with our *putting on*  
*the Lord Jesus Christ,* we may adorn  
the Gospel of God our Saviour; and  
I 2 by

116 *Making Provision for the Flesh, &c.*

Vol.III. by decking our Souls with his Graces  
here, may have a Title to the being  
cloathed upon with his Glory hereaf-  
ter. Which God of his infinite Mercy  
grant, &c.



SERMON





## SERMON XXXIV.

*Isaiab's Description of our  
Lord considered.*

---

ISAIAH ix. Verse the 6th.

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a  
Son is given, and the Government  
shall be upon his Shoulder: and his  
Name shall be called, Wonderful,  
Counsellor, The mighty God, The  
everlasting Father, The Prince of  
Peace.*

**W**E are now met together thank-  
fully to commemorate the un-  
conceivable Goodness of Al-  
mighty God, in sending from his  
Bosom the Son of his Love, to take Flesh  
upon him for our Sakes; and to rescue

Serm.  
XXXIV.

Vol. III. us from those Miseries, which we, in the Persons of our Representatives, had brought upon our selves. The Angels celebrated this stupendous Mercy with celestial Hymns and heavenly Melody; the Shepherds received the joyful News of it with becoming Raptures of Astonishment and Joy; the blessed Virgin-Mother and the holy *Joseph* entertained the Knowledge of it with a glad Surprizal; and shall we only be stupidly unaffected with the Contemplation of a Mercy in which we share so largely? These *glad Tidings of great Joy* which should be to all People, were not confined, like former Blessings, barely to the chosen *Jewish* Nation; but extend their Influence to all Quarters of the World, and have no other Bounds but those of the Universe: Even we who walked in Darkness have seen this great Light, upon us who dwelt in the Land of the Shadow of Death, even upon us hath this Light shined; and we may join with the Evangelical Prophet, in his triumphant Exclamation; *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder: and his Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

THE Time and the great Duty which Sermon. commandeth our Attendance, will not suffer me to handle these Words so fully as the Copiousness of the Subject may seem to require; I shall therefore in a manner only paraphrase upon them briefly, as they naturally divide themselves into these two Branches: First, a Description of our Saviour *Jesus*; and Secondly, a Character of him. The Description is contained in the former Part of my Text; *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder*: The Character is comprehended in the latter Part of my Text; *And his Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* XXXIV.

I. Then, here is a Description of our Saviour Christ *Jesus*, and that expressed in three Particulars; 1. That *he is a Child born unto us*: 2. That *he is a Son given unto us*: and, 3. That *the Government shall be upon his Shoulder*.

1. Then, our Saviour *Jesus* is a Child born unto us; *Unto us a Child is born*, By this Form of Speech the Evangelical Prophet doeth most evidently declare to us the Humanity of our Saviour. To be born a Child, is to enter into this World,



Vol.III. after the common Manner of other Children : and however miraculous his Conception might be, whatever Mysteries might be shrouded under his Incarnation ; yet his Birth had nothing in it that was extraordinary, but was suitable to that of other Infants. Like them he was formed of his Mother's Substance in the Womb ; like them he brought from thence the same Substance along with him ; and so like them became perfect Man : and therefore we are told in the *Athanasian Creed*, that he was *Man of the Substance of his Mother, born in the World*. And this may serve to confute the absurd Assertion of some conceited and fanciful Hereticks of old ; who in Consideration of the divine Power, which visibly accompanied all his Actions, would have divested him of his human Nature ; denying that he had a real Body of his own, but that he only assumed one as a Phantome or Spirit : for the overthrowing of which ridiculous Opinion, we need use no other Argument but the Words of the Prophet, that *unto us a Child is born*.

2. Our Saviour *Jesus* is a Son given unto us ; *Unto us a Son is given*. By which Expression the holy Prophet doeth undeniably establish the Divinity of our Saviour.

Saviour. To have any Thing given to Serm.  
us, is to possess that by the Bounty of XXXIV.  
another, of which before we were wholly  
destitute: for no Man can be said to  
give to himself, that which he hath already:  
and therefore this Present being made to the  
whole World, it must have been before in the  
Possession of some one, whose Authority  
extendeth beyond the Limits of the Universe;  
a Character, which can be applied to no  
created Being; and which belongeth only to  
him, who is *God over all, blessed for ever.* God  
then, *from whom cometh every good and perfect  
Gift,* gave us this, which was the Quint-  
essence and Perfection of them all; God  
hath given us a Son. We in this World  
marry and are given in Marriage, and in-  
crease and multiply our several Kinds;  
but it is not so with the Inhabitants of  
the Land of Spirits, they spend their  
Time in a constant Celibacy; and there-  
fore it could be no Son of theirs, whom  
God hath thus given to this under  
World: No, it was his own, his only  
Son, the Son of his Bosom and his Love,  
begotten by him before all the Worlds;  
whom he sent from those Mansions of  
Bliss and Happiness, to qualify us for a  
Share of his infinite Felicity. In vain  
then shall the antient or modern Here-  
ticks

Vol. III. ticks presume to deny our Saviour's divine Nature, or affirm him to be a meer though extraordinary Man: For since neither Men, nor Angels, nor the whole Creation, could supply such a Gift as the Prophet here foretelleth to us; we may answer all their Sophistry with this plain Piece of Scripture, that *unto us a Son is given.*

3. Our Saviour *Jesus* is one upon whose Shoulder the Government shall be; *And the Government shall be upon his Shoulder.* The Prophet by this Phrase doeth plainly denote, that *Regal Power* and unlimited Authority, which God the Father hath devolved upon this his Son. Though he came into the World in very mean Circumstances, and was the supposed Offspring of an ordinary Mechanick; yet an Almighty Force and Energy was lodged within him, and he might have exerted it as often as he pleased: Thus we find him testifying of himself, *that he could call for more than twelve Legions of Angels, and they should have been brought unto him.* But here we must take Care to avoid the Error of the *Jews*, who from this, and such other Places of Scripture, formed to themselves an Idea of earthly Grandeur; and expected the Appearance of the promised *Messiah* to be in all the formal



formal Pageantry of temporal Greatness: *Serm.*  
*His Kingdom*, he assureth us, *is not of this* XXXIV.  
*World*; he came not to exercise any out-  
ward Jurisdiction, but by the Reasonable-  
ness of his Doctrine, and the Sweetness of  
his Conversation, and the Majesty of his  
Example, to gain an Empire within our  
Hearts, and to govern in the innermost  
Recesses of our Souls. And if we wilful-  
ly refuse to submit to his Dominion, if  
we will not subject our Passions and Af-  
fections to that just Authority which he  
hath over them all; if we will rebel against  
his Laws, be disobedient to his Com-  
mands, and say with them that are stig-  
matized in the Gospel, *We will not have*  
*this Man to reign over us*; what can we  
plead in our own Defence? what Evasion  
or Shift can we possibly make use of?  
When the Prophet hath assured us so po-  
sitively and expressly, *That the Govern-*  
*ment shall be upon his Shoulder*? And thus  
much may serve for a brief Illustration of  
the Description which the Prophet here  
giveth us of our Saviour: That he is  
one, who though he was born into this  
World like other Children, yet was the  
eternal Son of the Almighty Father; and  
was vested by him with such a Royal Au-  
thority, as was suitable to the Majesty of  
so glorious an Extraction. I proceed now,  
II. In



II. In the second Place, with the same Brevity to run over the several Parts of that Character of our Saviour, which the Text affordeth to us in the latter Part of it: *And his Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* And,

I. His Name shall be called *Wonderful*. If we look back to our Saviour's immaculate Conception, by the over-shadowing of the Holy Spirit of God; if we employ our Thoughts upon the miraculous Union of the divine Nature with the human; if we consider the Unaccountableness to common Reason, that a Virgin should continue such when she becometh a Mother; we cannot reflect upon all these Transactions, which so far exceed the Power of Nature to accomplish; without confessing that these Doings of the Lord are *very marvellous in our Eyes*. If we cast our Eyes upon the Actions of our Saviour's Life, in which the extraordinary Power of God gave infallible Testimony to his divine Mission; if we behold the Dead raised to Life again, the Waves and the Winds obedient to his Word, thousands fed with a few small Morfels, the most inveterate Diseases healed with a Touch, and Devils dislodged out of the Wretches

Wretches they had possessed ; we cannot Serm. XXXIV.  
 refrain upon such a Contemplation, from  
 joining in their Song, who had got the  
 Victory over the Beast, *Great and mar-*  
*vellous are thy Works, O Lord !* If we car-  
 ry our Prospect forward to his Death and  
 Resurrection, a fresh Scene of Wonders  
 is opened to our View ; the rending of  
 the Veil of the Jewish Temple ; the uni-  
 versal Eclipse contrary to all the Rules of  
 Astronomy ; his rising from the Dead by  
 his own Almighty Power ; and his ascend-  
 ing up to Heaven in the Sight of so many  
 Witnesses, were Occurrences of so strange  
 and astonishing a Nature, that we cannot  
 but cry out when we reflect upon them,  
*Ask now of the Days that are past, which*  
*were before thee, since the Day that God*  
*created Man upon the Earth ; and ask*  
*from the one Side of Heaven unto the*  
*other, Whether there have been any such*  
*Things as these great Things, or have been*  
*heard like unto them ?* Well then may we  
 close with the holy Prophet, in this first  
 Part of his Character of our Saviour ;  
 and from that Series of Miracles which  
 attended his whole Ministry, may confess  
 that his Name is justly called *Wonderful*.  
 But,

2. His Name shall be called *Counsellor*.  
 At our Saviour's Entrance into this  
 World,



Vol.III. World, he found it over-run with all manner of Impurity; we had long given Ear to the Suggestions of our Lusts, and to the sly Insinuations of our grand Adversary; Pride and Ambition whispered to our Souls, that nothing was so valuable as worldly Honour; Covetousness persuaded us that our Happiness consisted in heaping up Riches with the greatest Industry; Luxury affirmed that true Felicity was never to be met with but in sensual Pleasure; and while we listened to no better Advisers than these, it is no wonder that we were misled by their evil Directions: but when Christ came to rectify the Errors of our Ways, he laid down Maxims of a much different Nature: he exhorteth us not to take up with such transitory Enjoyments, as extend no farther than our mortal Lives; but to seek after Advantages of a more durable Nature, which will stick close to us to all Eternity: he counselleth us, instead of the empty Honours of this World, to place our laudable Ambition upon resembling God, who is the Fountain and Foundation of all true Honour; instead of that Wealth which *perisheth in the using*, to lay up for our selves *Treasures in Heaven*; and instead of those empty short Pleasures of Sense, to aim at such Delights

Delights as are substantial and eternal: Serm. XXXIV.  
 His Advice is, that we should weigh the true Worth of our Souls, and see how far it out-balanceth the Value of our Bodies; that consequently, according to the common Rules of Prudence, we should take the greatest Care of that which is most precious: He layeth before us a Scheme of such Rules and Directions, as, if we will hearken to his wholesome Admonitions, will at once possess us of Happiness in this Life, and secure to us unutterable Felicities in another. These are the Instructions which our Saviour imparteth to us, this is that safe Method which he directeth us to pursue; and well might the *Jews*, who heard his Doctrine, break out with Astonishment into this Expression, *that never Man spake like him!* Whether then we will listen to his Advice, or no; whether, or no, we will be influenced by his earnest Persuasions; yet doeth it justify the second Part of the Prophet's Character of him, and convince us that his Name is fitly called *Counsellor*. But,

3. His Name shall be called *the mighty God*. Left the miraculous Operations performed by our Saviour should seem to proceed from a delegated Power, and only to be done by him at second hand; lest those admirable Directions, which he gave

Vol.III. gave to his Disciples, should only appear to be the Effects of Inspiration, from some Being more wise and knowing than himself; lest such Surmises as these should level our Opinion of him with that of other Prophets and holy Men of God; the Prophet therefore, to obviate such Misconceptions as these, assureth us that his Name shall be called *The mighty God*: such a positive Assertion of the Divinity of our Saviour, as one would think should be sufficient to stop the Mouths of all Gainsayers; or open them to confess with the scrupulous Apostle, *that he is our Lord and our God*. I shall give but one Instance of that divine Power, which was eminently conspicuous in our Saviour *Jesus*; and that is his rising from the Dead, after he had been three Days under the Dominion of it: This was a Performance beyond the Power of Nature, and therefore can have no less Agent than God himself: The Apostle informeth us, in his First Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, Chap. iv. and at the 14th Verse, *That Jesus died, and rose again*: where he expresseth himself by the Word *ἀνέστη*, which being purely of an active Signification, implieth that our Saviour raised up his dead Body by Virtue of his own Efficacy and Power: as Man he died, as God



God he rose again; and by so rising gave Sermon.  
an undeniable Evidence, that he deserved XXXIV.  
the third Part of the Prophet's Character,  
that his Name is truly called *The mighty*  
*God.* But,

4. His Name shall be called *The everlasting Father.* Since the Apostle informeth us in his First Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *That there be which are called Gods, whether in Heaven, or in Earth;* and since this Title hath been sometimes given to the Princes and Judges of the World; therefore lest the Prophet here should be so far misconstrued, as if he only meant, by the former Expression, some Man of extraordinary Worth and Quality; therefore, I say, the Holy Ghost doth by his Mouth, to establish the Divinity of Christ beyond all Contest, proceed farther to stile him *The everlasting Father.* And here we might naturally fall into this Expostulation: Did the Prophet foresee the perverse Obstinacy of future Ages? Was the unaccountable Corruption of our degenerate Times revealed to him? that he thus provideth against the groundless Cavils of the *Socinians*, by leaving no room for their malicious Objections? *The everlasting Father* was that peculiar Appellation, which was only appropriated to the One True God; the tremendous

K

Name

Vol.III. Name *Jehovah* was not more incommunicable; and therefore the blasphemous Opposers of the Divinity of our Saviour can surely urge nothing that is solid or rational, against an Argument so infallible, so demonstrative as this. But here we must cautiously distinguish in this Case, after what Manner, and in what Sense, our Saviour is here called *The everlasting Father*: The Prophet doth not, in this Character of him, speak in relation to his Personality in the sacred Trinity, for then he should rather have stiled him *The everlasting Son*; but in respect of that Unity which is in the Deity, by which he is co-essential and co-eternal with God the Father; in Conjunction with whom and the Holy Ghost, he is the common and universal Parent, and of his Kingdom there is no End. According to this easy Explication of the Terms, we must acknowledge he hath a just Claim to the Prophet's fourth Character, that his Name shall be called *The everlasting Father*. But,

5. *And Lastly*. His Name shall be called *The Prince of Peace*. When the blessed Angels celebrated the Nativity of our Saviour, they informed us that the Design of his coming into the World, next to the chief End of bringing Glory unto God,

God, was to promote *Peace amongst Men*; *Glory to God in the highest, on Earth* *Peace*: and answerable to this Intention of the holy *Jesus*, was the Time which he made choice of to take Flesh upon him in; when the whole World was in a profound Peace, and the Temple of *Janus* solemnly shut up, in the forty-fourth Year of the Reign of *Augustus Cesar*. Give me Leave in this Place to stop a little, and consider how strangely the wise Providence of God over-ruleth the Designs of earthly Potentates, and maketh them all subservient to his own great Ends. In the seventeenth Year of this Emperor there was universal Peace; and the Taxation, or enrolling all the Names of the Subjects of the Empire, was then begun by the Emperor's Command; which if it had gone forward would have left no room for a new one to be made in so few Years after; but some sudden Commotions happening in the Provinces, it was deferred till the forty-fourth Year of his Reign; when, as we are informed in *St. Luke's Gospel*, the blessed Virgin having conceived our Saviour, was obliged to repair to the City of *David*, there to be taxed with her Husband *Joseph*; to the admirable fulfilling of both those Prophecies, which foretold our Saviour's Dwelling

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XXXIV.



Vol.III. ling to be at *Nazareth*, and his Birth at  
 ~~~~~ *Bethlehem Judah*. O ! the Depth of the  
Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge
of God ! How unsearchable are his Judg-
ments, and his Ways past finding out !
 Thus this Prince of Peace took our Na-
 ture upon him, in the Midst of univer-
 sal Sereneness and Tranquillity; and level-
 led every Part of his Doctrine and Ex-
 ample against such Practices as were op-
 posite to Amity and Unity: His Gospel
 was the Gospel of Peace, and tended to
 the Removal of all Bitterness and Animo-
 sity; his proper Livery was that of Love,
By this shall all-Men know that ye are my
Disciples; his Disposition was peaceable,
 and his Temper mild; and the last Le-
 gacy which he left to his Followers was
 Peace; *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I*
give unto you. So that whether we con-
 sider him at his Birth, in his Life, or af-
 ter his Death; he is abundantly entitled
 to this fifth Character of the Prophet, and
 his Name is rightly called *The Prince of*
Peace.

Let us then admire this wonderful
 Person; let us attentively hearken to this
 divine *Counsellor*; let us fall down and
 worship this *mighty God*; let us adore this
 eternal Son, co-equal with *The everlast-*
ing Father; and let us imitate and obey
 this

this Prince of Peace. That so by making a due Use of these his several Characters, we may partake of his Benefits, and feel within our Hearts that happy Tranquillity which he came to purchase for us, even that *Peace of God which passeth all Understanding.* Serm. XXXIV.

AND now my Subject followeth me from the Pulpit to the Altar; and that very Person, who in my Text was given unto us in the Flesh, is as really communicated to us in the Spirit, in those holy Elements which wait for our Reception. It was an antient Custom amongst the *Jews*, upon any Day of more than ordinary Solemnity, for the Governor of the Feast, after the Repast was over, to take a Cup, which they called כּס-בְּרוּקָה *The Cup of Blessing*, and with Formality and Devotion to pass it through the Company: To this our Saviour alluded in the Institution of the holy Communion; when after Supper *he took the Cup, and blessed it, and gave it to his Disciples*; to this also St. Paul referreth; *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?* Let us therefore, in the Name of God, to set off the Solemnity of this great Festival, approach unto the Table of the Lord, and drink of his Cup, most truly stiled *the*

Vol.III. *Cup of Blessing*: So shall we join together the Memorial of his Incarnation, with the Commemoration of his meritorious Passion, and make an Abridgment of his Life in one Day: and thus feeding on him here by Faith with Thanksgiving, we may enjoy him hereafter in Vision and *Hallelujahs*; and bear our Parts in that celestial Doxology; *Salvation, and Glory, and Worship, and Praise, and Honour and Power, be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever!* Amen.



SERMON



SERMON XXXV.

Christ a Light to the Gentiles, and the Glory of *Israel*.

LUKE ii. Verse 32d.

A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy People Israel.



ALTHOUGH we meet with many clear Informations in the Writings of *Isaiab*, and the other Prophets; that the Design of the *Messiah*'s coming into the World, was to bring Salvation to all the Nations of the Earth: yet this Prophecy of *Simeon*, in the Words of my Text, is the first solemn Declaration given to us

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under

Vol.III. under the Gospel, in such express Terms as can admit of no Dispute; that the Holy *Jesus* was anointed by his Father to be the Saviour and Redeemer of all Mankind. It is true indeed, the Angel which appeared to the Shepherds at his Nativity, acquainted them then, that he brought *good Tidings of great Joy, which should be to all People*; but the *Jews* being apt to appropriate to themselves all Overtures and Promises of the divine Favour; might have been likely enough to restrain this universal Blessing to their own People, whom they thought the sole Favourites of Heaven; had not God, by the Mouth of this antient Prophet, cut off all Opportunities of such a Misinterpretation, by assuring them and us in the most plain Words imaginable, *that he should be a Light to lighten the Gentiles*, as well as the *Glory of his People Israel*. We are told in the Verses before the Text, that the Author of this Expression was a just and devout Man, and *one who waited for the Consolation of Israel*; that is, who panted with the utmost Fervency of Soul for the long expected Coming of the promised *Messiah*: and that God had vouchsafed, as a Recompence for his Zeal, to impart to him by his Spirit this comfortable Assurance, *That he should see*
the

the Lord's Christ before his Dissolution : Sermon.

And now when the holy Infant was brought into the Temple, to be presented before God according to the Law of *Moses* ; this religious Person was led thither by the Spirit, for the compleating of that divine Promise which had been made him : and no sooner did he fix his longing Eyes upon that delightful and adorable Object, but his Soul overflowed with Ecstasies of Joy ; and being inspired immediately by the Holy Ghost, he breaketh forth into these Prophetical Ejaculations : *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word ; for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation, which thou hast prepared before the Face of all People ; a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy People Israel!* Such a rapturous Form of devout Thanksgiving, so short, but withal so comprehensive and instructive, that our Church, who studieth, in all her publick Offices, to join together Brevity and Perspicuity, hath wisely appointed a Place in her common Service, and commandeth it to be repeated by us every Day.

IN my following Discourse upon the Words which I have chosen, I shall insist upon the Proof of these two Particulars, as they plainly lie before us in the Text.

I. I



I. I shall consider how our Saviour Christ may justly be called *a Light to lighten the Gentiles.* And,

II. I shall examine how he may be said to be *the Glory of his People Israel.*

I. THEN I am to consider how our Saviour Christ may justly be called *a Light to lighten the Gentiles.*

AND here the first Manifestation which was given by God, of his being designed to this great Office, was the conducting the Wise Men of the *East* to the Place of his Nativity, by the Guidance of a Star: to the Commemoration of which signal Act of Providence, the Devotions of this and the following *Sundays* seem more peculiarly adapted; and therefore it will be no improper Entertainment, to insist distinctly upon the historical Account of that remarkable Transaction. And to set the Circumstances of that Relation in a clear and true Light. We have no reason to conclude that the Persons mentioned by the Evangelist in the Account of this Affair, were either Kings for their *Quality*, or exactly three for their *Number*, unless we will give Credit to the Legendary Fables of the Church of
Rome,

Rome, and take up with their Romance of the three Kings of *Cologne*. They were certainly Persons of great Wisdom and Experience; profoundly versed in the Science of judicial Astrology, to which those *Eastern Nations* were particularly addicted; they had probably very much applied themselves to calculating the Nativities of eminent Persons; and having heard a Report which ran through all the *East*, that about that Time a *Jewish Prince* should be born, to whom all the Nations of the Earth should pay Homage (as it is recorded by several very eminent Historians) it might render them so much the more intent, at that Time, upon a critical Observation of the heavenly Bodies, and thereby enabled them to discover a new Star, which they looked upon as the Foreboder of some considerable Event: and being prepossessed with the Notions of that Grandeur, to which the *Jewish Prince* then expected was in time to attain; they presently imagined that this singular Appearance was especially determined to point out his Birth. In this Opinion they were so firmly grounded, that they took a long Journey from their own Country to *Judea*, to enquire for him that was born King of the Jews. At this Enquiry, which they made in the capital

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Vol.III. capital City, the most likely Place for receiving Information, we find the King and the Court not a little alarmed: which, by the way, is another considerable Proof, that such a powerful Prince was about that Time expected, since it is not likely otherwise that the Words of a few Strangers should have possessed them with so great and general a Concern. *Herod*, under pretence of joining with them in the Respect they were about to pay to this new-born Prince, getteth out of them the Time when the Star declared his Birth, and dismissed them with a Desire of hearing from them when they found him. And now they are no sooner departed from *Jerusalem*, but the Star which had disappeared during all their Journey (as being unnecessary to them then, when they had resolved to travel towards *Judea*) was seen by them again to their exceeding great Joy, and marked out the very House where the Infant lay. Vast surely must be their Surprise and Admiration, and they had Need of a Guide from Heaven to confirm them they were right; when they saw the humble Dwelling of this mighty Potentate, suitable to the mean Fortune and Character of his Parents! Yet even there they paid him their Homage and their Tribute; and,

according to the Custom of the *East*, where none appeared empty-handed before their Kings; they presented to him Myrrhe, and Gold, and Frankincense, as an Acknowledgment of his Designation to universal Monarchy. Thus was he from his Birth designed and declared to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles.

AND now that we may pursue the Story to the End, God, in order to preserve the Royal Infant, commandeth them to return to their own Country privately, without giving any farther Information to *Herod*; who having waited some time, and finding himself disappointed, ordereth all the Infants in the Place where Christ should be born, from two Years old and under, according to the Time which the Wise Men had informed him of, with the most inhuman Barbarity to be put to the Sword; whilst *Joseph* being admonished by God in a Dream, removed the holy Child and his Mother into *Egypt*. And here give me Leave, in Compliance with the Day, and for the Information of some, who think the Worship of these Sages was paid to our Saviour, in the Inn of *Bethlehem*, twelve Days after his Nativity (from whence it hath vulgarly the Title of Twelfth-tide) to desire them to take Notice, that this re-
mark-

Vol. III. remarkable Occurrence did not happen, till
 ~~~~~ after the *Virgin Mary's* Purification at  
*Jerusalem*, and probably not till about a  
 Year afterwards; because we cannot sup-  
 pose that *Herod* would have commanded  
 all the Infants to be massacred that were  
 under two Years old; unless he had com-  
 puted, from the Wise Mens Information,  
 that the King of the *Jews* must be pretty  
 near that Age. If therefore we fix the  
 Observation of this Festival to the twelfth  
 Day after the Birth-day of our Saviour,  
 we must allow at least the Interval of a  
 Year, without counting it precisely from  
 the very Day of his Nativity. This is  
 the Method by which we may truly  
 state the most probable Date of this re-  
 markable Instance, of our Saviour's being  
 a *Light to lighten the Gentiles*. Now  
 what is more expressive of Light, than a  
 Star? What could better illustrate his  
 Manifestation to the Gentiles, than the  
 miraculous Appearance of that celestial  
 Luminary, which conducted these *Magi*  
 from the Regions of the *East*, to make  
 their early Submission to this Infant-Mo-  
 narch? But the Veneration paid by these  
 Eastern Sages was only a Type or Pre-  
 figuration of that spiritual Empire and  
 Jurisdiction, which he was to exercise in  
 the Hearts of all the heathen Nations;  
 by

by turning them from Darknes unto Light, and from the Power of Satan unto the Kingdom of God. Serm. XXXV.

THE Prophet *Isaiah* is very clear in this Point: *It is a light thing*, saith he, *that thou shouldest be my Servant, to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my Salvation unto the end of the Earth.* This glorious Sun of Truth and Righteousness, which was to rise with bealing under his Wings, hath as large and universal an Influence as the Natural one; like that it cometh forth from the one part of the Heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again, and there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof. The Pagan World, though over-run with Idolatry, and clouded with the Mists of Ignorance and Superstition, was sensible of the Comfort of his refreshing Beams; and enlightned with the Rays of that illustrious Light which lighteth every one that cometh into the World. For now the divine Favour was no longer to be confined to one particular Nation of the Earth, to the utter Exclusion of all others; but was to have a Scene as large as Nature, and no other Bounds but those of the Universe: the Candle of the Lord was no longer lighted up,



Vol.III. up, only to be put beneath a Bushel ; but  
 was to be set conspicuously in a Candle-  
stick, that *so it might give Light to the  
whole House.* And indeed it is this parti-  
cular Qualification, of our Saviour's  
Coming into the World, that rendereth it  
so valuable and recommendable to us ;  
for had it not been thus amply extensive ;  
had the Covenant of Grace, like that of  
Circumcision, been narrowly restrained  
within the *Jewish* Pale ; all other Na-  
tions of the Earth, even the whole *Gen-  
tile* World, and we among the rest, had  
still laboured under the most unhappy  
Circumstances ; being bewildred in the  
thick Shades of Ignorance and Error, and  
thereby consigned over to Misery and De-  
struction. But by the Precepts, and Ex-  
ample, and Authority of our blessed Sa-  
viour, *we are called out of Darknes into  
his marvellous Light,* into a quite contra-  
ry State both of Knowledge and of Hap-  
piness. For as to Knowledge, his holy  
Word, *which is a Light unto our Feet ;  
and a Lantern to our Paths,* hath disco-  
vered those Abuses and Mistakes which  
we lay under, and given us a clear Per-  
ception of Righteousness and Truth.  
Our Notions of the divine Nature, which  
were so rude and indigested, that they led  
us to the Deifying even of Stocks and  
Stones ;

Stones; are rectified and improved into such noble Conceptions, as may give us a just Reverence for so august a Being: The Rules of our Behaviour, which were loose and scandalous, and suited to the Depravity of our corrupted Nature; are now regulated by the genuine Standard of the Gospel, and tend to make us *worship God in the Beauty of Holiness*: The fond Surmises that we had of a future State, which seemed calculated to gratify our voluptuous Appetites, are exchanged for the sure and prevailing Motives to Piety, of infinite and eternal Rewards and Punishments. Thus hath the Light of our Saviour's Doctrine dissipated those Clouds which darkned our Understanding; because God, who caused the Light to shine out of Darknes, hath shined in our Hearts; to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Christ Jesus. But farther as to Happiness, we are also released from that state of Misery, which was consequential to the Ignorance in which we were buried. This Light that was *designed to lighten the Gentiles*, hath infused Life and Vigour into our languishing Spirits; hath driven away from us those Horrors of Darknes, with which our Souls were at once obscured and terrified; and Heaviness

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which

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Vol.III. which had endured all the Night long, was succeeded by that Joy which came to us in the Morning. That Proneness and Tendency which we had to Evil, and which always carried its Sting along with it; is now turned into Serenity and Tranquillity of Mind, and the blessed Refreshings of a quiet Conscience: That Uncertainty in relation to the supreme Good, which was wont to rack our Souls with Doubt and Anxiety, and made us wander in the Dark after Phantoms and Illusions, giveth place now to the most clear Information, that it is only to be found in the Fruition of God, and the Possession of a glorious Immortality with him: those frightful Apprehensions of divine Vengeance, to which we were exposed in our former Condition, when we were the avowed Enemies of God and Goodness, are now happily exchanged for the blessed Assurances of Pardon and Favour, and the Adoption of Sons. Thus hath the Light of our Saviour's Gospel removed entirely that *Dimness of Anguish*, as the Prophet well expresseth it, which overshadowed our Souls; and the *Day-spring that hath visited us from on high, hath not only given Light to us that sate in Darknes*, but hath also led our Feet into the Ways of Peace. Since then our Sa-  
viour



viour hath both enlightened and refreshed the whole Race of dark and miserable Mankind, well may he claim and justify the Character, of being a *Light to lighten the Gentiles*. I proceed now to consider,

II. IN the second Place, How he may be said to be *the Glory of his People Israel*.

THE *Jewish* Nation was chosen out of all the Kindreds of the Earth, to be God's peculiar Portion and Inheritance; he vouchsafed to be personally their King and Governor, and *the lively Oracles of God*, as the Apostle observeth, *were committed to their keeping*: and though they were a rebellious and stiff-necked Generation, and thereby undeserving of the Advantages they possessed; yet God was so mindful of the Favour he had for them, that when he consulted the Good of the whole World, by sending his Christ to be a *Light to lighten the Gentiles*, he was not forgetful of the Interest of the *Jews*, but made him also *the Glory of his People Israel*. And,

I. HE was *the Glory of his People Israel*, by being born of a Virgin of that Nation. Out of the *Jews*, as St. Paul speaketh in his Panegyrick upon them, *as concerning the Flesh Christ came, who*

Vol.III. *is over all God blessed for ever.* Now that  
the great and longed for *Messiah*, whose  
Kingdom was to be Universal, and of  
whose Dominion there should be no end;  
that he in whom all the Kingdoms of the  
Earth were to be blessed; and who had a  
Name given him above all Names, that at  
the Name of *Jesus* every Knee should bow,  
of things in Heaven as well as upon the  
Earth; that he should vouchsafe to be-  
come their Countryman and Kinsman:  
but chiefly, That the eternal Son of God  
should condescend to take Flesh, of the  
Substance of a Daughter of the Tribes of  
*Israel*: This, I say, is an Honour so ex-  
traordinary, and a Privilege so excellent,  
as may creditably distinguish them from  
the rest of the World, to whom no such  
Benefit was ever imparted. It was a fre-  
quent Boast among the *Jews*, that they  
were the Sons of *Abraham* the Father of  
the Faithful; but how much more high-  
ly may they value themselves, for being  
the Brethren of Christ *Jesus*, according  
to the *Flesh*; who was the sacred Object  
of the Faith of *Abraham*, who saw his  
Day, and rejoiced to see it? If he that  
gained the Mastery at the Olympick Games,  
communicated, by obtaining so consider-  
able a Conquest, great Honour to the  
City or Country he belonged to; well  
may

may Judea brag of her illustrious Na- Serm.  
tive, who triumphed victoriously over XXXV.  
Death and the Grave, dragged the Devil  
and his Angels at his Chariot Wheels;  
and having conquered Powers and Prin-  
cipalities, *ascended up on high, and led*  
*Captivity Captive.* But,

2. OUR Blessed Saviour was *the Glory*  
*of his People Israel, by coming to fulfil the*  
*Law and the Prophets.*

THE Religion of the Jews, though  
established by God himself, yet in order  
to keep under that stubborn People,  
was clogged with abundance of uneasy  
Ceremonies, and thereby became a Yoke  
that they were not able to bear; and  
many of them, which *were the Shadows*  
*of things to come*, were not discerned to  
have the Weight on them which really  
they had: The many Prophecies too,  
which were under the Law, not being  
well understood till the Completion of  
them; were not always received with the  
Respect that they deserved, nor supposed  
to contain such momentous Discoveries.  
But when the Fullness of Time ushered  
our Saviour into the World, in him were  
fulfilled all the Types and Prophecies,  
which had been used to figure out so re-  
markable an Event; and thereby he gave  
an uncontestable Sanction both to the Sa-



Vol. III. credness of their Institutions, and the  
 ~~~~~ Divinity of their Inspirations. Nay farther, he complied with the *Mosaick* Rites; submitting to be circumcised in Obedience to the Law, though free from all manner of fleshly Pollution; and several Actions of his Life are recorded to have been done, that such or such a Prophecy might be fulfilled. But,

3. HE was also *the Glory of his People Israel*, by honouring their Temple with his immediate Presence.

WHEN those old Men amongst the *Jews*, who had seen the Beauty and Riches of *Solomon's* Building; observed at the finishing of the second Temple, how very disproportionable it was to the other, we are told that they wept at so melancholy a Prospect: and yet though this was so mean in comparison of that, and though it wanted five Privileges which the other enjoyed; namely, the *Urim* and *Thummim*, or that mysterious Oracle on *Aaron's* Breast-Plate; the *Shechinah*, or divine Presence between the Cherubim of Gold; the Fire from Heaven, which descended to consume the Sacrifices; the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Books of the Law; and the Spirit of Prophecy, in Cases of Emergency; though, I say, it was destitute of these considerable Advantages;

vantages; yet are we assured by the Prophet *Haggai*, that the Glory of that latter House should be greater than that of the former; and that for this important Reason, because the Desire of all Nations should come into it, and thereby that House should be filled with Glory. And in this Place it was that the eternal Son was publickly presented to his everlasting Father; even at that very Time when this Prophecy was uttered, *That he should be the Glory of his People Israel.* But,

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4. LASTLY, He shall most eminently approve himself to be the Glory of his People *Israel*, when he shall call the *Jews* to the Knowledge of his Gospel, and magnify his Name in their general Conversion. It is the well-grounded Opinion of several eminent Divines, that the Conversion of *St. Paul* in so miraculous a Manner, was a Type of the Conversion of the *Jewish* Nation, by some very wonderful and extraordinary Method: He was an obstinate Persecutor of the Church of God, and had a Zeal, but not according unto Knowledge; and such were the *Jews*, as he testifieth concerning them, Chap. x. of his Epistle to the *Romans*. Whether then they shall see the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven; and receive Conviction from their outward Senses, when they

Vol.III. *they shall look upon him whom they have*
 ~~~~~ *pierced*; or whether they shall be inward-  
 ly convicted by his Spirit, and have his  
 Law writ suddenly within their Hearts;  
 it is evident from many Places of the  
 Scriptures, which are much too nume-  
 rous to be reckoned up here; that when  
 the *fullness of the Gentiles is compleated*,  
 and the gathering of the Nations shall be  
 to Christ; God's infinite Wisdom will  
 contrive some Method, by which *he will*  
*turn the Hearts of the Disobedient to the*  
*Wisdom of the Just*, as the Heart of one  
 Man; and wherever they are dispersed  
 over the Face of the Earth, will bring  
 them as well as the *Gentiles* into his gra-  
 cious Covenant, and make them all *one*  
*Fold under one Shepherd*. Then shall they  
 exult with spiritual Joy, when they shall  
 see the Son of *David*, their beloved Prince  
 and Countryman, advanced to sit at the  
 right Hand of the Majesty on high; and  
 themselves made Members of his King-  
 dom of Grace here, and Inheriters of  
 his Kingdom of Glory hereafter: then  
 will they reap the Benefit of his dying  
 Intercession, *Father, forgive them, for*  
*they know not what they do*; and that  
 dreadful Imprecation which they have  
 so long laboured under, *His Blood be up-*  
*on us and upon our Children*; will by a  
 happy



happy kind of Alchymy, be converted Serm.  
into a Blessing ; and they will be purified, XXXV.  
by the Efficacy of it, from all Unclean-  
ness both of *Flesh and Spirit*. Thus shall  
the crucified *Jesus*, who was to the un-  
believing *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and  
to the Self-conceited *Greeks* Foolishness ;  
approve himself, as the Apostle declareth  
he should do, *the Wisdom of God*, as he is  
*a Light to lighten the Gentiles* ; and the  
*Power of God*, as he is *the Glory of his*  
*People Israel*.

*To him the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,*  
*be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might,*  
*Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth*  
*and for evermore. Amen.*





## SERMON XXXVI.

### The Certainty and Benefits of our Saviour's Resur- rection.

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I P E T. i. Verses 3d and 4th.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, which according  
to his abundant Mercy hath begotten  
us again unto a lively Hope, by the  
Resurrection of Jesus Christ from  
the Dead :*

*To an Inheritance incorruptible, and  
undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

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It was a grave and pious Custom amongst the Primitive Professors of Christianity in their common Form of Salutation, to make use of this Expression,  
*The*

*The Lord is risen*; thereby designing at *Serm.*  
the same time to fix the certain Belief of *XXXVI.*  
a Resurrection in their Minds, by this  
frequent Repetition, and also to arm them-  
selves against the Malice of their Perse-  
cutors, and the Danger of Apostasy, by  
the Contemplation of that other State,  
wherein *all Tears should be wiped from*  
*their Eyes*, and they should *receive the*  
*Reward of their Labours*; and indeed a  
firm and genuine Assent to this Article of  
our Creed may be justly stiled, the Ba-  
sis and Ground-work of Christianity in  
the general; as being the immovable  
Foundation of that Hope, which con-  
firmeth Believers in the Profession of the  
Faith. For as on the one Side, those who  
are wavering and doubtful in this Point,  
are too apt to make a serious Conclusion  
of what the Apostle ironically inferreth,  
our Troubles and Afflictions, our Courage  
and Resolution in the Midst of Sufferings,  
*what advantage they us, if the Dead rise*  
*not? Let us eat and drink, for to morrow*  
*we die*: So on the other Side, there can-  
not possibly be imagined a greater Induce-  
ment to Constancy and Perseverance in  
the Faith of Christ, than the certain and  
assured Persuasion of a Life to come,  
wherein *every Man shall receive according*  
*to his Works*. To this very End we find  
the



Vol. III. the Apostle making use of it in the Words  
 of my Text ; where addressing himself to  
 the dispersed Christians, that were driven  
 from *Judea* by the Persecution of *Herod*,  
 he layeth down the Doctrine of Christ's  
 Resurrection, with the happy Effects and  
 Consequences of it, as a Matter of the  
 greatest Triumph and Rejoycing ; and as  
 a Means to support and buoy up their  
 Spirits under the present Heaviness of  
 their *manifold Temptations*: breaking  
 forth upon that Contemplation, into a  
 rapturous Acknowledgment of the di-  
 vine Goodness ; *Blessed*, saith he, *be the*  
*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*  
*which according to his abundant Mercy,*  
*hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope,*  
*by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from*  
*the Dead : To an Inheritance incorrupti-*  
*ble, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*

IN my following Discourse upon which  
 Words I shall briefly insist upon these  
 five Particulars :

- I. I SHALL examine the Certainty and  
 Assurance, which we have of the  
 Resurrection of Jesus Christ from  
 the Dead.
- II. I SHALL enquire into the immedi-  
 ate Effect of it ; *Our being begotten*  
*again unto a lively Hope.*

III. I

III. I SHALL consider its remote Con-  
sequence; its entitling us *to an In-*  
*heritance incorruptible, and undefiled,*  
*and that fadeth not away.* And, Serm.  
XXXVI.

IV. I SHALL insist upon the gracious  
Motive to it; it was performed *ac-*  
*cording to God's abundant Mercy.* And,

V. I SHALL shew the Return we ought  
to make; *To bless the God and Father*  
*of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I. THEN I shall examine the Certainty  
and Assurance, which we have of the  
Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the  
Dead.

THERE is not any Truth revealed in  
holy Scripture, which God hath been  
more careful to secure us of, than that of  
our Saviour's Resurrection from the Dead;  
having cautiously removed all manner of  
Occasion for calling in question the Cer-  
tainty of it: not only by taking away all  
just Grounds of doubting; but also by  
making use of all necessary Proofs, to  
give unprejudiced Persons an undeniable  
Evidence, a most strong Assurance and  
Confirmation of it.

I. As to obviating all manner of Ob-  
jections, and removing all Doubts in re-  
lation to it. Whereas sceptical Persons  
might perhaps have questioned, whether  
I Christ

Vol. III. Christ were truly dead, or no; or if so, whether his Disciples did not come by Night and steal him away; these two Grounds of Suspicion and Uncertainty the divine Wisdom hath taken Care most fully to provide against; the former, by that Evidence which the Centurion gave to *Pilate*, of his being really and actually dead, in Chap. xv. of St. *Mark's* Gospel; together with the Testimony of so many Spectators, who beheld that Stream of Blood and Water, in which he *poured forth his Soul unto Death*: and the latter, by the exact Care and Caution of the High-Priest; who caused a vast Stone to be rolled before the Door of the Sepulchre, adding his Seal, and Soldiers of his own choosing, to guard it from the Attempts of his Disciples; who, had they had the Will, had neither the Power nor the Confidence to break open a Sepulchre hewn out of an entire Rock; or to force a Guard so strong as that which kept it; much less had they Treasure or worldly Cunning, to bribe their Silence as the High-Priest did: and whereas it was said, that *his Disciples came and stole him away*, whilst those that were appointed to watch him slept, it appeareth at first sight to be a studied Untruth; since none who are acquainted with the

Strict-



Strictness of the Roman Discipline, can *Serm.*  
believe them to be guilty of so gross a *xxxvi.*  
Negligence: and no doubt they better  
excused themselves to *Pilate*, by a pri-  
vate Relation of the true Matter of Fact,  
than the *Jews* could have done with all  
their Interest, though they promised to  
*persuade him, and secure them.* But this,  
though not so much as a well laid Falstiy,  
and only fit to prevail upon such as wish-  
ed it true, doth yet clearly confirm the  
Truth of our Saviour's Resurrection;  
since his Enemies were reduced to such  
pitiful Shifts, to endeavour to invalidate  
the Authority of it. But then,

2. As God thus took away all Cause of  
Doubt, so did he draw Arguments from  
all manner of Topicks, to prove and esta-  
blish this important Truth. Heaven and  
Earth jointly gave in their Evidence; for  
not only the Souls of holy Men were  
brought down from above to be united  
to their Bodies, in Proof of that Resur-  
rection by which themselves were raised;  
but the blessed Inhabitants of Heaven,  
the Angels, came down on purpose to  
publish it to the Women: and as for  
earthly Testimonies, we have a Cloud of  
Witnesses, to whom he shewed himself  
alive after his Passion, and exposed him-  
self to the Scrutiny of their very Senses;

Vol. III.  conversing and eating with them when he was risen, that they might not mistake his Body (as they once did) for a Phantom, or himself for a Spirit, having Flesh and Bones as they found he had; and even retaining still the Marks and Prints of the Nails and Spear, to shew the Identity as well as Reality of that Body which arose; the very Infidelity of one Apostle being not the least Confirmation of our Faith in this Particular. A Faith too well grounded to admit of any Cavil; and which being able to remove Mountains, will easily roll away the Stone from the Mouth of the Sepulchre, and shew us the Place where the Lord was laid: It will tell us, in the Language of the Angel, that *the Lord is risen, he is not here*; and will tacitely upbraid us, *for seeking the Living amongst the Dead*: It will call to our Remembrance, and propose to our Consideration, the Sayings of old, and the Prophecies of antient Date; That this was he *whose Soul should not be left in Hell*; This was the Holy One *who should not see Corruption*: It will represent unto us, that there is the Authority of God to recommend it, the Predictions of our Saviour to support it, the Testimony of Angels to confirm it, and the joint Depositions of above five hundred Eye-witnesses

witnesses to strengthen and uphold it. Serm. XXXVI.  
 Thus will it muster up and enumerate the most convincing Arguments, till it force us to break forth into the Confession of righteous Job; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth; and though after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God.* Thus hath divine Wisdom thought fit to give us such clear Demonstrations of our Saviour's Resurrection, as will either stop the Mouths of all Gain-sayers, or open them to confess with the Disciples of Jesus, and the primitive Christians, That the Lord is risen indeed: An Assurance that will appear extremely valuable to us, if we will but reflect upon the Advantages arising from it, and endeavour to qualify our selves for its happy Consequences. I therefore proceed,

II. To enquire into the immediate Effect of our Saviour's Resurrection; *Our being begotten again unto a lively Hope.*

THE Hopes and Expectations of the whole Christian World seemed to have been buried with Christ in his Death; and accordingly we find the Confidence of his Followers to wither and decay, immediately after his Crucifixion; *We trusted*



Vol.III. (say the Two that were travelling to *Emmaus*) *that it was He who should have redeemed Israel.* But, blessed be God, those Hopes which were thus buried for a time, were only hid like Seed in the Earth, which is not quickned except it first die, and afterwards shooteth up in a fruitful Increase: the Resurrection of our Saviour gave Life and Vigour to those Hopes and Expectations which his Death had crushed; our Wishes and Desires are new-born by it, and *we are begotten again unto a lively Hope: He is become the First-fruits of them that slept,* the earliest Product of the fertile Ground, and the Pledge and Earnest of a plentiful Harvest: By this we are assured, that we also shall triumph over Death and the Grave, the most formidable Enemies of human Nature; by this we assert our undeniable Privilege, above the rest of the Creation; in that the Period of this mortal Life, which putteth an End unto their Being, doth but place us in a Condition of never perishing; and when they cease to be, we begin to be immortal: *For if we have been planted together in the Likeness of his Death, we shall be also in the Likeness of his Resurrection.* If we are perfect in the same Manner, though not in the same Degree, as Christ was perfect; if we have

have conquered the World, as he conquered it; if we have subdued the Flesh, as he subdued it; if we have resisted the Devil, as he resisted him; if we have thus endeavoured to attain to the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ; then may we be said to be dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God through Christ our Lord. The Mortification of our corrupt Affections, a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness, are those necessary and indispensable Qualifications, which will make this Hope unto which we are begotten, appear to be lively and well grounded. We must therefore add to our Faith of Christ's Resurrection *Virtue, and to our Virtue Knowledge, and to our Knowledge Temperance, and to our Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godliness, and to Godliness brotherly Kindness, and to brotherly Kindness Charity; that so an Entrance may be ministered unto us, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, as our Apostle adviseth us. God indeed hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, but it dependeth upon our selves to convert it into Certainty; it lieth in our Power either to strangle it within us, or to give it Strength to come unto the Birth; for Hope as well as Faith will be dead and insignificant, unless it*

Vol. III. be attended with practical Piety: We must  
 ~~~~~ then resolve to cultivate this Hope, by  
holding our Faith with a good Conscience;
 for we are told, *that some having put that*
away, concerning Faith it self have made
Shipwrack; and where-ever that sinketh,
 Hope perisheth with it. Then alone
 shall we have a well-grounded Hope, of
 sharing in the Benefits of Christ's Resur-
 rection, when we are thereby led unto
 Newness of Heart; and being *thus made*
free from Sin, and become Servants unto
God; we may then expect to have our
Fruit unto Holiness, and the End everlast-
ing Life; and certainly we may well af-
 ford to pay this Service, if we proceed,

III. To my third General, namely, to
 reflect upon the remoter Consequence of
 our Saviour's Resurrection; its entitling
 us to *an Inheritance incorruptible, and un-*
defiled, and that fadeth not away.

THIS giveth us a View of that Advan-
 tage in Fruition, which we formerly con-
 sidered but in Hope and Expectation; it
 layeth before us a Map of the heavenly
Canaan, a lively Prospect of that eternal
 Kingdom, which was prepared for the
 Faithful from the Beginning of the
 World: Christ our elder Brother hath
 entered upon the Possession, and by so
 doing

doing hath made good our Title to it; Serm. we are Heirs of God, and Coheirs with ^{xxxvi.} him; and if we have any Part in his Resurrection, we are not only begotten *unto a lively Hope, but to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* Which Words contain a most elegant Description of that ineffable Joy which shall one Day be revealed; and if we examine them severally and particularly, we shall find them abound with such considerable Advantages, as can want nothing to recommend them to our Wishes.

I. THEN it is said to be *an Inheritance*; the very Expression speaketh a Title, that is both lasting and undoubted; whatever is derived to us by such a Tenure, we look upon as our own firmly and for ever: and indeed, without Propriety, and that perpetual, all that we have or enjoy is nothing; we are but Tenants, not true Possessors: For though glorious Things are spoken of this City of God; and though we may say of them, as the Queen of *Sbeba* said of the Glory of *Solomon's* Kingdom, *that the half thereof is not told us*; yet amongst all those glorious Things that are spoken of it, nothing is more glorious, more valuable than this; that our *Houses* there *are not*

Vol. III. *made with Hands*, but are *eternal in the Heavens*; Houses whose Builder and Maker is God; which shall last as long as their Builder himself; and whose Inhabitants shall remain as long as both, and dwell in them for ever and ever. What would all the Glories of Heaven be to us, if we had no other Advantage by them, than what *Solomon* saith worldly Men have of their Riches, the *beholding of them with our Eyes*? Had we such a Sight of all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, as the Devil represented to our Saviour, but with as little Right to any Part of them, as the Tempter was able to give to him; the glittering Sight might perhaps daze our Eyes, but never raise any other Passion within us, but that of Envy towards them who should enjoy them: and thus it would be with us as to the Kingdom of Heaven: To behold this spiritual *Canaan* afar off, without any Hope of ever possessing it, to view it as another's Country, not our own, would be but such a sad and melancholy Prospect, as the rich Man had, when he saw *Lazarus* in *Abraham's Bosom*; or as our Lord gave the *Jews*, when he told them, *That they should see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of Heaven, when they*

they themselves should be excluded. There is no true Satisfaction to be found in any Thing, in which we have no lasting Interest; and therefore it is the peculiar Advantage, which we reap from our Saviour's Resurrection, that we can look upon Heaven as our true Inheritance; and that Christ hath entailed it upon us firmly and unalterably, *Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom.* But,

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1. As this is an Inheritance, so is it incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: three very eminent and advantageous Characters, which infinitely exalt it above all other Inheritances.

2. It is incorruptible; it can never be alienated from our Possession: Worldly Inheritances, even Kingdoms, are transitory; whereas this in Heaven cannot be taken from us. Estates here often shift their Landlords, and what is one Man's to Day, is another's To-morrow; and yet how do they call the Lands after their own Names, when those Names and those Lands which are called after them, must one Day perish together; when the Owners shall reserve nothing of their Possessions but a Grave; and in a short time shall scarce be distinguished from that very Earth in which they were buried? But this Inheritance to which we are entitled,

M 4

shall

Vol. III. shall out-last the Earth and all the Works thereof, and shall have no other Measure of its Continuance but Eternity.

2.) This Inheritance is *undefiled*; it hath no Mixture of Filth, no Commerce with Impurity: Worldly Inheritances are so far from this Character, that their Owners may oftentimes be liable to a Blush, when they consider, by what base Means they many times procure them; with how much Sin themselves enjoy, and others to whom they must be left shall spend them; and yet how thankful are we to those who bequeath them to us! If we think then we have reason to be grateful to Men, for leaving us such sordid Legacies as these; how much more should we be so to our heavenly Father, for this Inheritance which is undefiled!

3.) This Inheritance *fadeth not away*; it never impaireth or groweth worse upon our Hands. Though worldly Inheritances should be continued to their Owners never so long, should they come to them by the fairest and most direct Means; yet are they continually fading and decaying, still losing their Beauty, and lessening in their Lustre; there is some Moth or Canker that incessantly fretteth, and at last never faileth to eat them quite up: But in Heaven, as we shall have an incorruptible and

undefiled,

undefiled, so shall we have also an immaculate Crown; not like the *Olympick* one of Bays or Herbs, which soon withered on the Heads of those that wore them, but always fresh and green and flourishing; such and so lasting shall be *the Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give us in that Day.* And what now can be imagined, to add to or set off such an Inheritance as this; unless the Contemplation of the Goodness which imparteth it, may give more Weight and Value to the Present? And this bringeth me,

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IV. To the Consideration of my fourth Particular, in which I am to insist upon the Cause and Motive of these great Advantages; they were performed according to God's abundant Mercy.

There was nothing in us miserable Wretches, that might entitle us to such blessed Advantages; but it was that Mercy of God *which is over all his Works*, that inclined him to bestow such inestimable Blessings upon Persons so wholly undeserving of them. We had nothing to qualify us for such an Inheritance; since we were *by Nature Children of Wrath*, and Heirs of Destruction; and nothing remained to us of Right, but a certain

fear.

VOL. III. *fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation.* This is an Inheritance incorruptible, and we are daily mouldring into Corruption; this undefiled, and we polluted; this never fading, and we still decaying: *Οὐκ ἰκανοί εἰμεν* (saith the Apostle) *we are not sufficient, not fit* (for the Word signifieth either) *as of our selves, but our Sufficiency (or Fitness) is of God.* He maketh us Partakers of his divine Nature, and by that Partakers of the divine Inheritance; he infuseth Light into our Understandings, and Holiness into our Wills, without which *no Man shall see the Lord*; he cleanseth our Hearts, and washeth our Hands, that so we may ascend unto the Hill of the Lord, and rest and dwell within his Tabernacle: This Advantage cometh to us by the sole Disposition of our heavenly Father; he it is that prepareth that for us, and he it is that fitteth us for that; and maketh us meet (as the Apostle telleth us) *to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* And therefore there is no Merit of Condignity or Desert, nor indeed so much as of Congruity or Agreeableness, that can justly be pleaded by us, but it must all be resolved into the divine Goodness. And certainly one would think it were sufficient for us, that we are assured we shall

shall partake of this Inheritance, without making out our own Title to it; that we might well be contented to be Heirs, without attempting to set up for Purchasers: for if we will take Notice that it is called *an Inheritance*, it excludeth all Purchase upon our Side; since this were to renounce the Plea of Succession, to cast off our filial Claim and Interest, and to quit a Title certain and indisputable, upon the Account of one that may have a Flaw in it. Christ indeed was the great Purchaser; he paid down the Price of it to God's Justice; and for his sake it is freely bestowed upon us also, by the Goodness and Bounty of his heavenly Father. As therefore he hath called us to his Kingdom and his Glory, so he giveth us that Glory and that Kingdom, for no other reason but because he is pleased to do so; into this we find our Saviour resolveth it, *It is your Father's good Pleasure to give you a Kingdom. Not unto us then, O Lord, not unto us; but unto thy Name be the Praise, for thy loving Mercy, and for thy Truth's sake.* And this conducteth me,

V. To the Consideration of my Fifth and last Particular, namely, to enquire into the Return which we ought to make for

Vol. III. for all these Benefits conferred upon us ;
and that is, to bless *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

God is content we should reap these great Advantages upon this easy and pleasant Condition, that we give him the Glory of his Blessings : and certainly he that grudgeth so little for so much, deserveth neither the Increase nor the Continuance of them : still to partake of the Streams of the divine Bounty, and never to bless nor so much as mind the Fountain ; still to be receiving, and never returning, argueth an Ingratitude, as void of Ingenuity as it is of Piety. Rivers pay their Tribute to that Ocean from whence they flow ; unto the Place from whence they came, thither they return ; Nature it self teaching us to express our Gratitude to those from whom our Benefits are received. Praise and Thanksgiving are the Reflection of God's Glory upon himself ; the constant Entertainment of the Saints in Heaven, and most becoming Employment of those on Earth, who hope to share with them in their Inheritance ; so that of all others, it becometh most the *Just to be thankful* : and indeed it is not only a becoming Thing, a Piece of Decency, but of Justice also ; *Give unto the Lord the Honour due unto his Name :*

Name. Thanks is a Debt we must always be paying unto God ; a Rent our great Landlord requireth and indenteth for ; and the Omission of which will forfeit our Tenure ; *Offer unto God* (saith the Psalmist) *Thanksgiving.* *Call upon me in the time of Trouble ; so will I hear, and thou shalt praise me.* And here we must take notice, that as we must be sure to be thankful to him ; so must we be so to none besides him, in the same Degree that we are to him, since he is the chief Author of all our Good : to misplace our Thanks, is as bad as to withhold them ; nay to pay our Rent to a wrong Landlord, is even worse than not paying it at all : God will by no means give his Glory to another, nor will he suffer any to share with him in his Praises ; since from him alone it is that we receive all those things for which our Praises are due. The Text here seemeth to restrain our Thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, not that the other Persons of the blessed Trinity are hereby excluded from our returns of Gratitude ; but our Thanks are chiefly to be directed to him, who as he is the Fountain of the Deity, and of all Operations in the divine Nature ; so every good and perfect Gift, whether of Nature, Grace, or Glory, is
said

Vol. III. said to come down to us from him, *the Father of Lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, and therefore we find also the holy Apostle St. Paul addressing himself particularly to him, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in Christ.*

THUS have I gone over the five several Heads which I proposed to discourse upon; give me leave to draw some short Inferences from them, and so I shall conclude. And,

I. FROM the certain Assurance which we have of Christ's Resurrection, let us learn to hold fast the Faith without wavering, of which this is the Seal and Confirmation.

IF Christ had not risen from the Dead, your Faith had been vain, and our Preaching vain; and that malicious Reflection which the Jews cast upon him whilst he was nailed to the Cross, *He saved others, himself he cannot save*, had carried with it the Force of a convincing Argument: If he would come down from the Cross, his inveterate Enemies said they would believe in him; but how much greater an Instance was it of divine Power, to break the Bars of Death and the Grave, than only to disengage himself from the Instrument

strument of his Sufferings? and shall we not then be effectually persuaded of the Divinity of his Person, and the Authority of his Gospel, which have these strong Credentials to strengthen and confirm them? His Resurrection hath cleared all Scruples that could be objected upon the account of his Afflictions; and therefore we find the Apostles making use of it in order to convert the stubborn Jews; this was a Passage which agreed, even with their Notion of a *Messiah*; and they who were scandalized at the Despicableness of his Appearance, at his Passion and his Death, were no less dazzled with the Brightness of his Glory in this Triumph of his over Death and the Grave; and Thousands were converted with a single Sermon, when the Apostles were armed with so unanswerable an Argument: the Truth of all his sacred Doctrines is unmoveably confirmed by his Resurrection; since none but God could raise himself up from the dead, and it is impossible that God should be the Author of a Falſity. This Consideration therefore of the Certainty of his Resurrection, should make our Faith stedfast and unalterable. But,

2. FROM the immediate Effect of his Resurrection, *our being begotten again unto a lively hope*, we should learn at all Times

Vol. III. Times to rely upon his Goodness, to put
 our whole Trust and Confidence in him.

WHAT Dependence can we have upon God, wherein we shall need a greater Instance either of his Power, or of his Good-will, than he hath already shewn us in this amazing Mercy, the raising our Saviour from the Dead? Can the divine Omnipotency be more remarkably asserted, than by raising Life out of Death, by bursting open the adamantine Doors of that dark Prison, and breathing Life again into a Mass of Clay, as he did at first in our Creation? or can infinite Goodness be more fully exercised, than in reviving those Hopes which were dead with our Redeemer, and giving us fresh Assurances of Happiness and Immortality? If then God hath so wonderfully signalized both these great Attributes in our behalf, can we have any Reason to distrust him, or to call in question his Ability or his Love? If we are never so low in our worldly Circumstances, if we are never so barren of spiritual Comforts, it will still seem easier to exalt our outward Condition, or to fill our Souls with inward Refreshments, than to raise our dead Bodies to Life again; yet this God hath done in our great Representative, and hath thereby *begotten in us a lively Hope,*

Hope, that he will make us Partakers of the same Advantages : This Consideration, if we press it home to our Souls, will be a firm Foundation for our Confidence in God, and a most certain Fund of an immoveable Assurance. But,

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3. FROM the remoter Consequences of Christ's Resurrection, our being entitled to *an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away* ; we should learn to qualify our selves for such inestimable Benefits, lest otherwise we should forfeit them by our own default.

SINCE the Lot is fallen to us in so fair a Ground, and that we have such a goodly Heritage, let us endeavour to secure so indefeisible an Estate, as shall never be in another's Power to deprive us of, nor in our own to lose, when we are once possessed of it. How do we value our earthly Inheritances? How dear are they to us? How loth are we to part with them? *The Lord forbid it, said Naboth to Abah, that I should give the Inheritance of my Fathers to thee* ; this being but an earthly Inheritance, whereas ours is a heavenly one ; he chose rather to hazard his Life, than part with the Inheritance of his Fathers ; and shall we be willing to part with our celestial Inheritance, for the

Vol.III. gratifying an Appetite, or for a petty Interest? If we would not, we must endeavour to fit our selves for such a Possession; it is described to be incorruptible and undefiled, and therefore in order to our Enjoyment of it, *this corruptible even here must put on Incorruption*, and we must endeavour to be pure as our Inheritance is pure: it is said to be *an Inheritance that fadeth not away*, and therefore if we desire to be Partakers of it, we must keep our good Intentions still vigorous and lively, not suffering them to wither or drop away; for how would this *Inheritance of the Saints in Light* (as St. Paul stileth it in his Epistle to the *Colossians*) relish with a Child of Darkness and Impurity? But as the Pleasure of a rational Man would with a Beast, or of a glorified Spirit with a brutish Man. God indeed holdeth out to us a Crown of Glory, but we must endeavour to fit our Heads for it; and must constantly pursue Holiness in this Life, that so we may be capable of Happiness in the next; and this Consideration will powerfully oblige us to fit our selves, by inward Purity, for the Enjoyment of that Inheritance which is reserved for us in the Heavens. But,

4. FROM the only Motive to these Advantages, their being given us *according to God's abundant Mercy*, we ought to learn an humble Sense of our own Unworthiness, and a fervent Love of our great Benefactor.

SHALL we be proud because God is merciful, and turn this Grace of his into Wantonness? Shall we value our selves for being much indebted; and make that an Argument of our own Deserts, which is only an Instance of his Munificence? Hath God exalted us when we were so much humbled, and shall we tempt him to abase us, by being too much exalted? Shall we depress that Mercy by looking upon it as our due, which hath magnified it self so highly in our Favour? But shall we carry on our Impiety yet farther? be wholly unaffected with so wonderful a Goodness, cold and indifferent under all these Obligations? Ought we not rather to break out into Raptures of Gratitude, and Ecstasies of Love? Should not the Contemplation of such inestimable Benefits melt down our hard Hearts into Tenderness and Affection? make them pant and thirst after the living God, and long to be united with him whom our Soul loveth? Where we find the Ability and

Vol.III. the Will to do us Good, and that evidenced by such considerable Advantages ; Love is the most natural and the most easy Acknowledgment ; and as our want of Merit to deserve them, enhanceth the Mercy of him who hath conferred them ; so ought it also proportionably to increase the Love and Affection of those who have received them. This Consideration, if we reflect seriously, will enforce Humility in relation to our selves, and Gratitude and Love in relation to our God. But,

5. *and Lastly*, FROM the Return which is expected at our Hands, *to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, we ought to learn, that publick Thanks should be given for extraordinary Blessings ; and that the loving Kindness and Faithfulness of the Lord should not be concealed from the great Congregation.

To stifle God's Mercies in a private Acknowledgment, is rather to defraud than to give Thanks ; God designeth in all these Blessings to promote his own Glory as well as our Good, and we do not sufficiently answer that great end, unless we take care to praise him in the Assemblies, that his Name may be magnified over all the Earth. Especially, the Mercies of which we have now been speaking, being

not confined to particular Persons, but *Serm.*
 extended to all Families and Nations of *xxxvi.*
 the World, ought to have an Acknow-
 ledgment as publick as their Influence ;
 that so we may at once express our own,
 and stir up and excite the Gratitude of
 others. Since then God hath raised us
 from Death to Life, in the Person of Christ
 Jesus our elder Brother ; since thereby he
 hath begotten us unto a lively hope of be-
 ing one day raised up even as he is ; since
 he hath entituled us to *a heavenly Inheri-*
tance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that
fadeth not away ; and since all this he
 hath done for no Merits of our own, but
according to his abundant Mercy ; let us
 chearfully make that only Return which
 he expecteth at our Hands, offering un-
 to him ~~the~~ *Sacrifice* of Praise, and telling
 forth his *Works* with Gladness : Let us
 bless *the God and Father of our Lord Je-*
sus Christ, and express the Sincerity of
 this our Thankfulness, by a due Partici-
 pation of that Cup of Blessing which he
 hath commanded us to receive ; that so
 by a thankful Remembrance of his Death,
 we may pay our Acknowledgments for
 the Blessing of his Resurrection ; which
~~that we may~~ now do, and do it worthily,
 God Almighty grant of his infinite Mercy,
 N 3 through

182 *The Certainty and Benefits, &c.*

Vol.III.through the Merits and Mediation of Je-
sus Christ.

*To whom with the Father and the Holy
Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power,
Might, Majesty, and Dominion, hence-
forth and for evermore. Amen.*



SERMON



SERMON XXXVII.

Christ's Ascension a Motive to Purity and Perseverance.

EPH. iv. Part of Verse 8.

*When he ascended up on high, he led
Captivity Captive, and gave Gifts
unto Men.*

NEVER did any Combatant Serm.
XXXVII.
wrestle with greater Difficul-
ty, any Warrior obtain a more
signal Victory, or any Conquer-
or triumph in a more glorious manner,
than our blessed Saviour did under the
several Circumstances of his Passion, his
Resurrection, and his Ascension. In his
Passion, we find him entering into the
N 4 Field

Vol. III Field of Battle, and in his single Person maintaining a bloody Conflict with three formidable Enemies, Death, Sin, and the Devil: in his Resurrection, we see him victorious over his Foes, lifting up his Head above his vanquished Competitors, and trampling upon the Necks of his prostrate Adversaries: in his Ascension, we behold him mounting his triumphal Chariot, returning with great Splendor to his native Heaven; and reaping the just Fruit of his heroical Atchievements, even a Place at the right Hand of his eternal Father. As then we have sympathized with our great Representative, in all the Hardships of his bitter Passion; as we have rejoiced in all his Joy, at the late glad Festival of his Resurrection; so may we also claim a becoming Share, in the Glory and Solemnity of his Ascension: since as for us he fought and conquered; so he triumphed also for our sakes; not forgetting his humble Followers in that height of Exaltation, but closely interweaving their Interests with his own; for *when he ascended up on high, he did not only lead Captivity Captive, but gave Gifts also unto Men.*

THE Apostle in this Description of our Saviour's Ascension, seemeth to take the Model of it from the antient *Roman* Tri-

Triumphs; in which it was customary Serm.
for the victorious General, who had xxxvii.
been remarkably successful against the
Enemies of Rome, to be conducted to the
Capital with all the Grandeur and Solemnity, that could be furnished out by a City which was Mistress of the World: The Conqueror was raised upon a noble Eminence, which overlooked all the Pageantry of his stately Triumph; his Captives attended upon his Chariot-wheels, and were led bound after him as Trophies of his Valour; and by how much the greater their Quality was, or their Force, by so much more glorious did their Captivity render him: thus in the midst of Shouts and Acclamations was he waited on through Crouds of admiring Spectators, to the Temple of their chief God, and Council-Chamber of their Senators; scattering all the Way rich Medals amongst the Multitude, to perpetuate the Remembrance of him and his great Actions. This was indeed the utmost height of human Glory; and the nearest Resemblance this under World could afford, of the Majesty and Magnificence of our Saviour's Ascension: For he, as the Roman Triumpher, *ascended up on high*; he also *led Captivity Captive*, and he in like manner gave Gifts unto Men.

IN

Vol. III. IN my following Discourse upon which
 Words, I shall consider the three most
 principal Circumstances of this glorious
 Triumph of our Saviour, in the same
 Order that the Apostle hath taken Notice
 of them to our hands :

- I. THAT he ascended up on High.
- II. THAT he led Captivity Captive.
- III. THAT he gave Gifts unto Men.

I. THEN, one principal Circumstance
 of our Saviour's Triumph was that of
 his *ascending up on high*.

WHEN Christ, who descended from
 the Bosom of his Father, to compleat
 the great Work of our Redemption, had
 by his admirable Instructions, his ex-
 emplary Actions, and his meritorious
 Sufferings, finished the Design which
 brought him into the World; he first,
 for the Consolation of his afflicted Disci-
 ples, and to confirm the Truth of his
 Doctrine beyond all Contradiction, broke
 in sunder the Bands of Death and the
 Grave, burst open the Doors of his Marble
 Prison, and shewed himself alive to his dis-
 console Followers : he gave Satisfaction
 to their very Incredulity, by the plainest
 Demonstration of touching and hand-
 ling; he conversed with them frequently
 for

for the Space of forty Days, in the Presence of sometimes above five Hundred Eye Witnesses : and all Power being given to him in Heaven and in Earth, he set in order such Things as were necessary and expedient, for the future Well-being and Government of his Church. And now the Time being come that he should return unto his Father, and reassume that State of Glory which he had quitted for our sakes ; he led forth his Disciples to the Mount of *Olives*, about a Sabbath-day's journey from *Jerusalem* ; and having solemnly blessed them with lifted up Hands, and promised that he would send them the Holy Ghost to comfort them ; he was taken up into Heaven in the Presence of them all, and a Cloud received him out of their Sight. Whether the Angels (who were commanded *to bear him in their Hands, lest at any Time he should dash his Foot against a Stone*) officiously attended as ministring Spirits, to waft him in their Arms to the Kingdom of his Father ; or whether he made the Clouds his Chariot, or chose to fly up upon the Wings of the Wind : his Ascension was certainly accompanied with such Majesty, as dazled the Eyes of weak human Spectators ; and made the Interposition of a Cloud become necessary, to screen them from
from

Vol. III. from such Objects as were insupportably glorious. For, must we not suppose (to let Imagination frame a Prospect of that Scene which Sense would have sunk under) must we not, I say, suppose the Battlements of Heaven crowded with Myriads of Blessed Spirits, who thronged to meet and congratulate their victorious Lord! must we not suppose the Heaven of Heavens lifting up its eternal Gates, and setting wide open its everlasting Doors, *that this King of Glory might enter in!* Must we not suppose, Thrones, Powers, and Dominions, Angels and Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim, all Orders and Degrees of the celestial Hierarchy, tuning their Voices to the golden Harps of God, and chanting out, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory!* Must we not suppose the Almighty Father shining full upon him, with the ineffable Brightness of unclouded Divinity, whilst He, *who thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, reflecteth back the Rays with proportionable Lustre! Must we not suppose him seated at the right Hand of the Majesty on High, in all the unconceivable Glory of the Deity; and in that post of Honour, and that posture of Repose, receiving the Adorations

tions of the heavenly Inhabitants, whilst *Serm.*
 all his Enemies are made his Footstool ! *xxxvii.*
 such may we imagine our Saviour's Re-
 ception to have been when he ascended
 up on high; and much more glorious
 may we be sure it was, than can be sha-
 dowed out by the most luxuriant Fancy;
 for if *it hath not entered into the Heart of*
Man to conceive the things which God hath
prepared for all them that love him; what
 Imagination can soar so high a Pitch, as
 to reach that Immensity of Happiness and
 Honour, which is the Portion of his on-
 ly beloved Son, *in whom alone he is well*
pleased ! But,

II. ANOTHER principal Circumstance
 of our Saviour's Triumph, was that of
 his *leading Captivity Captive.*

THIS Repetition is an Idiom or Pro-
 priety of Speech, which is sometimes
 made use of to denote any Matter of more
 than ordinary Consideration; and it here
 signifieth the Quality and Importance of
 those Prisoners, over which our Saviour
 triumphed at his Ascension: these were
 those avowed Enemies of God and Good-
 ness, which he fought with in his Passion,
 and conquered in his Resurrection; and
 which are now his Captives fettered and
 disarmed, and unable to act any thing in
 opposition to their Conqueror. I.

Vol.III. I. THE first of these Adversaries which he led Captive was Death; the most implacable Enemy of that human Nature, which he had so highly dignified by assuming it into the Deity: he first set upon him in his retinue of Diseases, which he banished in an instant with a Word or a Touch; he afterwards attacked him in his own Person, and fairly got the better of him in the Lists of the Cross; he tamed his Fury and divested him of his Horror, by plucking out his Sting in which his Strength chiefly lay; and sanctified the Grave, and broke open its Inclosures, by becoming *the first Fruits of them that slept*; he proclaimed a general Gaol-delivery for all his Prisoners, by the Power and Example of his Resurrection: and hath removed their dread of him, by giving them a firm Hope of that Life and Immortality which *is brought to light through his Gospel*. Thus hath he bound and shackled this King of Terrors, not suffering him to act but by his Authority; either to summon his Friends to Him and Happiness, or to execute his Vengeance upon his Enemies.

2. A SECOND Prisoner led Captive by our Saviour was Sin; so bitter an Enemy to all Mankind, that it poisoned the very Fountain of their Being, and communicated

communicated its Infection to all the Streams that flow from it: thus he vigorously combated wheresoever he met with it, and successfully drove it out of all its Strong-holds; whether it appeared bare-faced in Profaneness and Irreligion, or whether it concealed it self under a Mask of Hypocrisy; either by confronting its Impudence he put it out of Countenance, or else exposed its Deformity by plucking off its Vizard; the Majesty of his Example, and the Purity of his Doctrine, were the Weapons which he used to carry on this Warfare; and they were two well tempered to meet with a Resistance from any Armour which the Impostor could oppose against them. Thus Sin gave Ground before him daily, till he finished his Victory by the Blood of his Passion; and paying down the Price of the Guilt we had contracted, intitled us to Repentance and Remission of Sins.

3. A THIRD Prisoner led Captive by our Saviour was the Devil; such an open Adversary to all the Sons of *Adam*, that his very Name is Satan or *the Enemy*, and his Character *Διάβολος*, *the Accuser of the Brethren*: But this roaring Lion who goeth to and fro, seeking whom he may devour, hath met with an Over-match in the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*. The first
Foil

Serm.

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Vol. III. Foil which he gave him was in his Oracles, which were gagged and silenced at his Nativity; his next Encounter with him was in the Wilderness, where he fought with and overcame him Hand to Hand, with the Sword of the Spirit, even the Word of God; the constant Employment of his Life, was to destroy his Works, to baffle his Temptations, and to release those Wretches which were under his Possessions; he could not defend himself by the odds of Multitude, but Legions must go forth where-ever Christ appointeth them; nor dare to take Refuge so much as in the Swine, unless they first obtain his permission to do so; he hath so tied him up that he can go no farther, than he in his infinite Wisdom thinketh fit to allow of; and where-ever he wandereth he must drag his Chain after him, as an eternal Badge of his Vassalage and Slavery. Thus hath Christ *bruised the Serpent's Head*, and verified the Prediction of *the Seed of the Woman*; and as when he descended into the lowest Parts of the Earth, he triumphed over the Devil in his own Dominions; so now at his ascending up on high, he forceth him to contribute to the Greatness of the Solemnity, by increasing the Number of his Captives. This is the Captivity which

which Christ led Captive, these are the Prisoners which graced his Chariot Wheels: Death, the King of Terrors; Sin, the Bane of Happiness; and the Devil, the Prince of the Powers of the Air, and the Ruler of the Darkness of this World. But,

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III. ANOTHER principal Circumstance of our Saviour's Triumph, was that of *his giving Gifts unto Men.*

CHRIST, the great Conqueror of such formidable Enemies, to set off all the other Solemnities of his Triumph, was willing to scatter such a Donative amongst his Friends, as might for ever engage them to commemorate his Victory, by making them share largely in the Advantages of it: Such was the inestimable Gift which he bestowed, when he poured out his Holy Spirit upon the Apostles; which was never imparted in so great a Measure, as soon after this his glorious Ascension into Heaven.

THERE were three great Ends which were chiefly aimed at by the Triumpher, in the Largesse which he distributed amongst the People; and which were all fully answered by our victorious Redeemer, in that inestimable Present which he made to his Disciples.

O

i. To

Vol.III.

1. To make a lasting Impression upon their Memory, both of himself, and of the Benefits which he had purchased for them.

2. To hand down the Remembrance of his great Atchievements to those Generations which were yet to come. And,

3. To communicate some Part of his Abundance, to supply their Necessities, or to enlarge their Conveniences.

I. THEN, it was one main Intention of the Triumpher, when he distributed his Largess amongst the Spectators, to make a lasting Impression upon their Memory, both of himself and of the Benefits which he had purchased for them: And therefore in the Medals, which were then dispersed, the Conqueror was always represented on the one Side, that so they might all be acquainted with his Person; and his great Actions were enumerated, or hinted at, on the other Side, to put them frequently in mind how much they were indebted to him. But how could our Saviour more effectually have promoted this Design, than in the Mission of the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles? Is it not the constant Employment of that divine Inmate, to keep up within us the Memory of our generous Benefactor, and of all those great Things which he hath done
and

and suffered for us? Is he not perpetually inculcating into our Minds, that he was the only Son and express Image of the Father, so to make us familiar with his Person and Character; and that he lived and died to procure our Happiness, to make us sensible thereby of the Obligations he hath laid upon us?

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2. ANOTHER End which the Triumpher proposed to himself, in the Distribution of his Largeſs amongst the People, was to hand down the Remembrance of his great Atchievements to thoſe Generations which were yet to come: And therefore it was customary to preſerve theſe Medals, and tranſmit them ſucceſſively from Father to Son; and ſome of them were laid up in the Publick Treafury, as a Record and Register of ſuch eminent Performances. But neither could this Deſign be any way ſo well accompliſhed, as by our Saviour's imparting the Holy Spirit to his Followers. This is the great Evidence, whoſe powerful Demonſtration convinceth us, at the Diſtance of ſeventeen Centuries, of the Truth and Certainty of thoſe lively Oracles, which contain an Account of *theſe glad Tidings of great Joy*: He it is that, by ſetting the Seal of God to them, and recommending them to our Acceptance

Vol.III. by so sacred an Authority, maketh us
 ~~~~~ firmly and heartily assent to such Myste-  
 ries, as would startle our Faith without  
 these strong Credentials. It is the Power  
 and Efficacy of his inward Operations,  
 that removeth those Difficulties, and si-  
 lenceth these Cavils, which unenlighten-  
 ed Reason would be apt to suggest against  
 the more exalted Maxims of divine Re-  
 velation; and giveth us as clear a Con-  
 viction of such remote Occurrences, as  
 if, with *Thomas*, we saw and felt them  
 sensible and present. In short, by him  
 we are assured, that the Man Christ Je-  
 sus did so conquer, and so triumph, as  
 we are informed that he did; and that all  
 which is recorded of him, by the several  
 Evangelists, is real matter of Fact, and  
 no romantick Invention.

3. ANOTHER Design of the *Roman*  
 Triumpher, in distributing his Largeſs  
 amongst the admiring Multitude, was  
 thereby to communicate some Part of  
 his Abundance, to supply their Necessi-  
 ties, or to enlarge their Conveniences:  
 The General who had obtained such an  
 important Victory, as entitled him to the  
 Honour of a publick Triumph, had  
 usually amassed together a considerable  
 Treasure, the Spoil of those Provinces  
 which his Arms had wasted; and according  
 to

to the Greatness of his Soul and the Largeness of his Ability, besides those Medals which were promiscuously thrown about, he gave a Quantity of Corn or Money to each Citizen, that so every one might share in the Advantages he had procured. And what better Method could the holy Jesus have made use of to promote the End we just now mentioned, than that of sending the Holy Ghost into the Breasts of his Disciples? This is the blessed Vehicle of all spiritual Graces, by which all our Wants are abundantly supplied, and all our former Advantages improved to Perfection: How do we by these Means partake effectually of the Strength and Sufficiency of Christ himself? How doeth he shed abroad within our Souls, Love, Joy, and Peace, and all those other Excellencies, which the Apostle truly stileth *the Fruits of the Spirit!* Are we not, by this sacred Band of Union, fastned at once to Christ our Head, and to all the other Members of his mystical Body; and thereby made Candidates for those inefable Enjoyments, which he hath prepared for the Faithful, from the Foundation of the World!

Thus then hath our Saviour, in the Solemnity of his Ascension, given Gifts unto Men, even the Graces of God's Spirit;



Vol.III. Gifts as much more valuable than those of other Conquerors, as his Warfare was more difficult, and his Triumph more glorious.

AND thus much at present it shall suffice to have observed, upon the three grand Circumstances of this Triumph of our Saviour, his *ascending up on high*, his *leading Captivity captive*, and his *giving Gifts unto Men*; I shall now only draw some few practical Inferences from the several Parts of the foregoing Discourse, and so I shall conclude. And,

I. FROM the Consideration of our Saviour's *being ascended up on high*, we should learn to *seek those Things which are above, where Christ now sitteth at the right Hand of the Father*. Our great and gracious Representative hath not only broken in sunder the Bars of Death, and thereby entitled us to a glorious Resurrection; but hath also ascended up into the Joys of Heaven, and given us firm Assurances that we shall follow him thither: but if we hope to attain to this Recompence of Reward, we must be sure to trace the Footsteps of the Captain of our Salvation, by *mortifying our Members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, and the like*; and by conforming our selves to the Customs of that Country, where

we

we hope to spend an Eternity with him; Serm.  
we must here live as Citizens of the *New* XXXVII.  
*Jerusalem*, if we hope to be free Denizens  
of it hereafter: and though we sojourn in  
Houses of Clay, whose Foundation is in  
the Dust; yet must we submit to the  
Constitutions of that City which is above,  
*whose Maker and Builder is God* himself.  
Christ our truest Treasure is laid up for  
us there, and where our Treasure is,  
there should our Hearts be also; our Souls  
should mount upwards to those angelical  
Regions, upon the devout Wings of  
Prayer and Meditation; and should look  
down from that Height with Scorn and  
Contempt, upon whatever the flattering  
World can attempt to allure them down  
with. Our glorious Harbinger is gone  
before, to prepare a Place for us far above  
the Heavens, and is entred already into  
his Joy; and if we unite our selves to him  
by sublimating our Desires, and panting  
after such Delights as are spiritual and  
celestial; we shall have a Fellow-feeling  
of all his Enjoyments, shall anticipate  
the Blifs of a blessed Immortality, shall  
be admitted even here into the Joy of our  
Lord, and by seeking surely find those  
Things which are above. For they who  
will ascend into the Hill of the Lord, and  
stand up in his holy Place, must be the

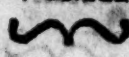
Vol. III Generation of them that seek him, *even*  
 of them that seek thy Face, O God of Jacob.  
 But,

2. FROM the Consideration of his *leading Captivity captive*, we should learn to despise those vanquished Enemies, which our Saviour hath disarmed and made the Trophies of his Conquest. When Death was supported by that authentick Commission, *In the Day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die*; what could be more formidable to human Nature? When Sin was suffered to reign in our mortal Bodies, who was able to bear its intolerable Tyranny? What Vassalage could be more shameful or more toilsome, than that of being *Servants of Iniquity unto Iniquity*? When the great Dragon, that *old Serpent which is called the Devil and Satan, was cast out of Heaven, having very great Wrath*; Wo was it to the Inhabitants of the Earth and the Sea: and what human Force could be able to keep the Field against *Powers, and Principalities, and spiritual Wickednesses in high Places*? But when Death is divested of all its Pomp of Terror, and disarmed of that Curse which did chiefly make it dreadful; what have we to fear from so impotent an Adversary? Who instead of a grim Jaylor to confine us in a  
 Dun-



Dungeon, is made a Door-keeper to open *Serm.*  
 the Gate of Life and Immortality? When *xxxvii.*  
 Sin is deposed from the Dominion it  
 usurped over us, and is brought into Sub-  
 jection to Reason and Religion; why  
 should we be apprehensive of so weak an  
 Enemy? whose Strength is wholly foiled,  
 and whose Deceits are all exposed, and can  
 therefore prevail against us neither by  
 Force nor Stratagem? When the Head of  
 the Serpent hath received a mortal Bruise,  
 and he is *reserved in Chains of Darknes*  
*unto the Judgment of the great Day*; why  
 should we be afraid to combat a spent  
 Foe? who already hath been worsted by  
 the Champion of our Cause; and whose  
 Armour and fiery Darts are neither of  
 them available against the Sword of the  
 Spirit, and the Shield of Faith? since our  
 Saviour hath thus enslaved Death, Sin, and  
 the Devil, we ought to be no more dis-  
 couraged by what they can act against us;  
 than the Soldiers of a General who hath  
 gained a signal Victory, are afraid of those  
 Prisoners that wear the Chains of the  
 Conqueror. But,

3. From the Consideration of his *giving*  
*Gifts unto Men*, we should learn how it  
 becometh us to partake of his Donatives,  
 if we would pretend to be Sharers in the  
 Honour of his Triumph. We must then  
 deck

Vol.III. deck our Souls with his spiritual Graces,  
 if we desire to be owned as his Partizans  
and Friends; we must put on the Lord  
Jesus, and wear his Livery, if we hope to  
be admitted to the Marriage-Supper of  
the Lamb; and we must shew that we  
have an Unction from the Holy One, if  
we expect to be refreshed with that Oyl  
of Gladness, with which *he is anointed  
above all his Fellows*. For how inexcusa-  
ble shall we be in the Sight of God, if  
we withdraw from the Bounty of so mu-  
nificent a Benefactor! and wilfully shut  
our Hearts against those good and perfect  
Gifts, which he is ready and desirous so  
liberally to impart to us! The not vouch-  
safing to receive these spiritual Talents, is  
a worse Provocation than laying them up  
in a Napkin; and yet that exposed the  
unprofitable Servant to *weeping, and wail-  
ing, and gnashing of Teeth*. Let us rather  
endeavour by all possible Methods, to  
cultivate and improve these Pledges of  
God's Favour; to keep our Bodies chaste  
as Temples of the Holy Ghost, and our  
Souls sanctified as the Shrine of that Tem-  
ple; to be conversant in all the Duties of  
our holy Profession, in private Prayers  
and publick Supplications, reading and  
hearing the good Word of God; and espe-  
cially in the Reception of that holy Sa-  
crament,

crament, which giveth Life and Vigour to all our other Performances. The approaching Lord's Day is one of those three Festivals, when our wise and careful Mother the Church of *England*, who desireth our more frequent Appearance at God's Table, indispenfibly requireth our Attendance there; and therefore I conjure all the Members of its Communion, to confider how they can answer it to God and their own Souls, if they allow themselves in the Neglect of so positive a Command; and turn their Backs upon that Ordinance even at those solemn Seasons, when she accepteth of no Excuse for so scandalous an Omission. But as our Church enjoineth us not to flight the Invitation, which crieth, *All Things are ready, come unto the Marriage*; so doeth it also caution us against the dangerous Presumption, of intruding into the Guest-room without a Wedding-garment: Let us therefore proceed after *David's* usual Method, in order to his more solemn Offices of Devotion; *I will wash my Hands in Innocency, O Lord, and so will I compass thine Altar*: For how shall we dare to appear before a God of Purity, if we indulge our selves in any Filthiness either of Flesh, or Spirit! How shall we presume to take his Son into us, unless we  
make



**VOL. III.** make our Souls fit for so spotless an Inhabitant ! Or how shall the Holy Ghost make that Heart his Chapel, which, by the Admission of sinful Lusts and Appetites, is turned from God's House into a Den of Thieves ! Most dreadful are the Consequences of such an Intrusion, to those that dare rush so presumptuously upon it, since they certainly *eat and drink their own Condemnation, by not considering the Lord's Body.* Let us then resolve to cast away from us every Weight, and especially those Sins which do most easily beset us ; and let us run with Diligence the Race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who is ascended up on high, hath led Captivity captive, and given Gifts to Men, which will enrich them to Eternity, unless they reject his Bounty, or misemploy the Effects of it.

*To him with the Father, and the holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.*

S E R M O N



# SERMON XXXVIII.

## The Holy Ghost a Comforter to Christ's Church for ever.

St. JOHN xiv. 16.

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,*



**I** hath been justly observed by some judicious Writers, that there are three remarkable Divisions of Time, in which each Person of the individual Trinity hath appeared distinctly to preside over the Church of God. God the Father

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Vol.III. ther from the Creation of the World,  
 ~~~~~ till the Coming of our Saviour in the  
 Flesh; God the Son from his entrance into
 the World, till his Mission of the Holy
 Spirit upon the Apostles; and God the
 Holy Ghost from his Descent, as at this
 Time, to the Age we now live in,
 and to the End of the World: not
 that we must suppose, in any of these
 Dispensations, any one Person acting ex-
 clusively of the other two; the Concur-
 rence of all three being absolutely ne-
 cessary, since their Actions proceed joint-
 ly and coequally from one God. Thus
 God the Father made the Worlds by
 his Son, and by his Spirit which *moved*
upon the Face of the Deep: thus God the
 Son became Man by the Counsel of the Fa-
 ther, and was ushered into his Humanity
 by the Operation of the Holy Spirit:
 and thus God the Holy Ghost, when he
 entered upon his Ministry, did so by the
 Will of the Father through the Interces-
 sion of the Son. For our Saviour ta-
 king Notice a little before his Passion, of
 that just Melancholy which had seized
 his Disciples, upon the Apprehension of
 losing their Lord and Master, assureth
 them that *he will not leave them comfort-*
less, but will provide for them sufficiently
 during his own Absence; *That* (in the
 Words

Words of my Text) *he will pray the Father; and he shall give them another Comforter, that he may abide with them for ever.* Serm.
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In my following Discourse upon which Words, I shall briefly insist upon these two Particulars:

I. I SHALL enquire who that Person is, which is here promised to the Disciples of our Saviour, and in them to all Christians in succeeding Ages.

II. I SHALL examine how it doeth appear, that this Comforter here promised, doeth still abide with the Church of Christ, and shall do so hereafter unto the World's end.

I. THEN, I shall enquire who that Person is, which is here promised to the Disciples of our Saviour, and in them to all Christians in succeeding Ages.

AND of this we shall best be able to make a true Judgment, by taking our Measures from those several Characters which we find given of him in Holy Scriptures. Sometimes he is called Παράκλητος the *Paraclete*; a Word which hath a double Signification; either that of *Advocate*, as we find it rendered in the first Epistle of St. John at the second

Verse,

Vol. III. Verse, if any Man sin, we have *Παράκλητον*, an Advocate with the Father: or that of Comforter, as we find it expressed in the Text, *And he shall send ἄλλον Παράκλητον* another Comforter.

F. THEN, let us consider him as an Advocate; and that he is in a twofold respect; either in respect of Christ, or in respect of us.

1.) He is an Advocate in respect of Christ, to plead for him and the Truths delivered by him; to convince the World of the Divinity of his Person, and the prevailing Efficacy of his Mediation; that he was the Son of God from all Eternity, the true Messiah that should come into the World; and that all he acted and suffered was for our sakes, as our Example, our Representative, and the Propitiation for our Sins: Now these great and necessary fundamental Truths the Spirit of God layeth home to Mens Consciences, and applieth to the Souls of true Believers, with the fullest Evidence and the most clear Conviction; whilst the rest of the World is left inexcusable in their wilful Ignorance, or their malicious Opposition.

2.) He is also called an Advocate in respect of us; for Christ being ascended to his Father, and sat down at the right Hand

Hand of the Majesty on high, to plead there the Merits of his Obedience and his Sufferings; hath deputed this Blessed Spirit to officiate for him upon Earth, and to discharge his Employment of our Advocate here below; to help our Infirmities, to enlighten our Understandings, and to regulate our Affections, and to support us in our Sorrows, and to sustain us in Temptations, and to make Intercession for us to the Father, with such effectual *Groanings as cannot be uttered*.

BUT as he is thus an Advocate in the first Sense of the Word Παράκλητος, so is he also, in the second Sense of it, a *Comforter*; and in this Signification he is here promised to be sent by our Saviour to his Disciples, to buoy up their Hearts, and enliven their Spirits, under the Difficulties and Dangers with which they were to encounter; to fill them with Joy and Peace of Conscience, under all their Afflictions and Persecutions; to make up to them in inward Consolations, whatsoever was wanting of outward Encouragement; and by daily applying to their dejected Spirits the comfortable Promises of the Gospel, and the blessed Expectations of a happy Immortality, to overbalance all the momentary Vexations of this Life, with that

P

eternal

Vol.III. *eternal weight of Glory* which shall one day be revealed. But,

2. ANOTHER Title given him in Holy Writ, is Πνεῦμα ἀληθείας, *the Spirit of Truth*; a Character which he deserveth upon the three following Accounts, as he is the Witness of Truth; as he is the Interpreter of Truth; and as he is the Teacher and Remembrancer of Truth.

1.) THEN, He is the Witness of Truth; particularly of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and of those Rules and Maxims which are to direct us in our Profession. It is true indeed we have other Evidences, even a Cloud of Witnesses to confirm us in our Belief; such as the Consent of all Ages since our Saviour's Time, the Majesty and Efficacy of the sacred Oracles, their wonderful Preservation through ten bloody Persecutions, the surprizing Harmony that appeareth betwixt the Old Testament and the New, and amongst the Writings of the several Evangelists; with the Attestation given to Matters of Fact, by the most eminent of the *Jewish* and Heathen Historians: though these, I say, are sufficient Testimonies, to confirm the sacred Writings, and the Truths delivered in them; yet the Holy Spirit it is that setteth the Seal of God to them, by informing the Understanding, and inclining

clining the Will to an immoveable Assent to them, and Acquiescence in them; removing from our Minds all Prejudice and Partiality, and establishing these Doctrines by an unanswerable Way of arguing, which the Apostle stileth the *Demonstration of the Spirit*.

2.) HE is called the *Spirit of Truth*, as he is the best Expounder and Interpreter of it. Indeed the Knowledge of Languages, with their several Idioms, the History of those Times in which the Scriptures were written, the Perusal of Expositors both antient and modern, the comparing of Texts with one another, and the Analogy of Faith with right Reason and sound Philosophy, are not only useful, but necessary Aids, to enable us to search out the deep Maxims of Divinity; but to make these Helps truly effectual to that End, we must have the Assistance of this Holy Spirit, illuminating such Minds as are humble and well disposed: otherwise we shall run into the wildest Heresies, and be shamefully rent into Schisms and Factions, we shall doat about *Questions and Strifes of Words*; and be endlessly engaged, as the Apostle expresseth it, in the *perverse Disputings of Men of corrupt Minds*. For well may we say of this Spirit of Truth, as the *Ethiopian Eunuch*

Vol.III. did to Philip, *How shall we understand, unless he guide us, that in his Light we may see Light?*

3.) FARTHER yet, He is stiled the *Spirit of Truth*, as he is the Teacher and Remembrancer of it. Thus our Saviour assureth us in relation to him, that the *Comforter, whom the Father will send in his Name, shall teach us all Truth, and bring all Things to our Remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto us.* He then it was that taught the Apostles, and enabled them, by imparting the Gift of Tongues, to propagate Christianity to all parts of the World; he it was that instructed them how to preach the Word, and how to regulate the Churches which they planted by his Assistance; he brought all such Things into their Minds, as our Saviour had at any Time delivered to them, either relating to Doctrine, or Order, or Discipline; securing them by his Power against making Shipwreck of their Faith, or corrupting any Part of it by Mistakes or Forgetfulness. But,

3. ANOTHER Name by which he is known and described in Holy Scripture, is Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, *the Holy Ghost.* A Name which is used to express his Nature, as the other two are to explain his Office; he being Holy in himself, and the

the Author and Fountain of Holiness in all others. Now by this Expression is undeniably understood, a third Person in the Godhead distinct from the Father and the Son. That by the Holy Ghost a real Person is meant, and not only the Power and Energy of the Father ; as some Hereticks of old, and the *Socinians* of late, have boldly adventured to maintain ; may be easily inferred from those peculiar Offices, which we find assigned to him in Holy Writ. Our Saviour informeth his Disciples, that *when the Comforter is come, he will reprove the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment ; that he shall lead them into all Truth, and shall shew them things to come ;* the Apostle telleth us that it is his Province, to know and make known *the deep Things of God ;* to dispense those Gifts by which the Church is edified, and to divide of those Gifts *severally to every one as he will.* Now these Actions of rebuking, instructing, foretelling, dispensing, and distributing according to his Pleasure, are all so many Evidences of that Personality, by which he is distinguished from the Father, and the Son : but there are other Texts which confirm this Doctrine, in which the Holy Ghost is separately reckoned, as well as the Father, and the

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Vol. III. Son, who are generally confessed to be distinct Persons. Thus St. John, when he mentioneth the *Three that bear Witness in Heaven*, stileth them *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*; thus our Saviour, when he giveth Orders to baptize *all Nations*, appointeth it to be done in his Father's Name, in his own, and in the Holy Ghost's; and St. Paul in his Prayer joineth the Communion of the Holy Ghost with the Love of God the Father, and the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor do these last Instances only prove him to be a Person, but a divine Person too, *God blessed for ever*; as is also most plainly and unanswerably inferred from St. Peter's Words to *Ananias*, in the fifth of the *Acts* at the 3d and 4th Verses; where having taxed him in the former of those Verses, with *Satan's having filled his Heart to lye unto the Holy Ghost*; he positively assureth him in the latter, that he *had not lyed unto Men, but unto God*.

AND thus much shall suffice for the first Particular, namely, an Enquiry, who that Person is, which is here promised to the Disciples, and in them to all Christians in succeeding Ages: He is the Paraclete, our Advocate and Comforter; He is the Spirit of Truth, the Witness,
the

the Interpreter, and the Remembrancer of it; and he is the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the Trinity, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son. This was he whom our Saviour promised to the Apostles, and who after his triumphant Ascension into Heaven, descended upon them in a most solemn Manner; being ushered in with the *Noise of a mighty rushing Wind*, and taking upon him the Figure of *cloven Tongues of Fire*, which visibly sat upon the Heads of each of them: *Tongues*, to denote infused Knowledge and Elocution, together with the Gift of understanding all Languages; to enable them to discharge that large Commission, of preaching the Gospel to all Nations: *cloven Tongues*, to shew the Variety of those Gifts, with which they were endued by the Holy Spirit; and *fiery Tongues*, to intimate that Zeal and Activity, with which they should labour in the Work of the Ministry; and what burning and shining Lights they should prove to the World, shining with an exemplary Piety towards God, and burning with fervent Charity to the Souls of Men. And never indeed did the Holy Spirit of God pour out himself in so great Abundance, and in such large Measure and vast Proportion,

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XXXVIII.

Vol.III. tion, as he did at this Time upon the Apostles ; so that it is said of them, that *they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and that they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire* : insomuch that St. John the Baptist, though the greatest of the Prophets, yet is said to be *the least in the Kingdom of Heaven* ; that is, the meanest Disciple in the Church of Christ had greater Participations of the divine Spirit. For under the *Mosaical* Dispensation, God had been sparing of the Effusions of his Spirit, and had only sprinkled some Drops of it upon the *Jewish* Church, while all the World besides was dry and barren ; but now he giveth his Spirit in liberal Showers, watering with it plenteously all the Corners of the Earth, Thus upon the Preaching of St. Peter, the Holy Ghost fell upon all that heard the Word, and soon after at St. Paul's laying on of Hands, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied. Nor did this blessed Spirit only visit this under World, to make a short stay, and then return to him that sent him ; but continueth still to guide and direct the Christian Church ; and to take all true Professors into his Guardianship and Protection : so that the Governors thereof may borrow the
same

same Stile, which the primitive Planters of Christianity made use of, *It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to Us: For what else could be the meaning of those Words of our Saviour, that he would be with them unto the End of the World,* but that he would supply the Defect of his bodily Presence, by the Assistance and Operation of his Holy Spirit? and that the Father at his Request should *send them another Comforter, that he might abide with them for ever?* and this bringeth me to the Consideration of,

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II. My second Particular, which was to examine how it doeth appear that this Comforter here promised doeth still abide with the Church of Christ, and shall do so hereafter unto the World's end.

AND here an Objection looketh us full in the Face, which it will be necessary to answer, before we proceed any further; and that is this: If the Comforter shall abide with us (will some be apt to say) whence cometh it to pass that he doeth not in our Days make such glorious and wonderful Manifestations of himself, as he did in the more early Times of Christianity? Why is not that miraculous Power exerted now, which was so frequent with the Apostles, and even with the ordina-
ry

Vol. III. ry Professors? Where are the Gifts of
 ~~~~~ Healing, and diversity of Tongues which  
 he then shed abroad so universally and  
 familiarly? we do not now see the Spirit  
*poured visibly upon all Flesh*; neither do  
*our Sons and Daughters prophesy*, nor *our*  
*old Men dream Dreams*, and *our young*  
*Men see Visions*; we seem to be left desti-  
 tute of all these great Advantages, not to  
 know (with them in the *Acts*) whether  
 there be any Holy Ghost, and to want  
 both the Presence and the Power of the  
 Comforter. To this I answer, that it is  
 true indeed, the Workings of this Holy  
 Spirit are not now so visible, yet are they  
 not less certain than they were before:  
 he doth not now descend in cloven  
 Tongues of Fire; for this he did but once  
 at his solemn Inauguration, at his first I-  
 nitiation into the Office of a Comforter;  
 we know Princes appear in greater Splen-  
 dor on their Coronation Day than at any  
 other Season; at that Time Medals are  
 dispersed, and Favours conferred with a  
 most liberal Hand: and thus also did the  
 Holy Ghost act at his magnificent En-  
 trance upon the great Employment of  
 ruling and governing the Church of God;  
 he took upon him this high Character in  
 a most majestick Manner, and to set off  
 the Grandure of it, *gave Gifts unto Men.*  
 Now



Now some of these Gifts were only temporary, to continue no longer than the Church's Exigencies required; such as Languages, Miracles, and speaking unpremeditatedly, *according as the Spirit gave them utterance*: These ceased when the Foundation of this great Building was strongly laid, when the Gospel had got good Footing in the World, when *Paganism* was overthrown, its Oracles silenced, and when *Judaism* was swallowed up in Christianity: then there appeared no farther Necessity for these extraordinary Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, it being afterwards sufficient that such wonderful Operations had once been performed for confirmation of the Faith, and that the Accounts which we have of them are undoubted and authentick: and these sorts of Gifts are called by the Schoolmen *Gratiæ gratis datæ*; that is, such kind of Graces as were bestowed on some Persons, not so much for their own private Edification as for the Good of the Publick, and the Church in general: and which when that End was fully answered by them, became superfluous and unnecessary, and were therefore discontinued: but there are still other Gifts of the Spirit, which he yet imparteth to all true Believers, and will go on to do so to the end of

Vol. III. of the World; and these are stiled  
 ~~~~~ *Gratiæ gratum facientes*, by which are  
 meant such Graces as are properly adapted to the standing Necessities of the Church in General, and of each private Member in particular; such are Faith, Hope, Charity, Devotion, Humility, Purity, and the like; which he shedeth abroad, and cultivateth in the Hearts of sound Professors, and will thus continue with them unto the World's end.

HAVING thus got over that material Objection which stood in our way, let us see in what manner we may sensibly perceive, that this Holy Spirit doeth abide with us still, and shall continue with the Church in all succeeding Generations.

I. THEN, we find the Holy Spirit abiding still with us, in that he is the only Principle of our spiritual Life. It is by Virtue of the quickning Spirit, that we, *who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, are raised together with Christ unto newness of Life*; it is by the Power of the Holy Ghost, that (as St. Paul speaketh) *we are renewed in the Spirit of our Mind*; that we find a real Change and Alteration in our selves, by which we are transformed into other Persons, quite different from what we were in our State of Nature; by this the decayed Frame of our
 I Souls

Souls is repaired, and its Faculties and Powers much improved and enlarged; we are hereby endued with clearer Judgments, to discern more nicely betwixt Good and Evil: with juster Inclinations, and nobler Affections; so that by this Means we become new Men, and new Creatures, *created according to God in Righteousness and true Holiness.*

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2. As he thus imparteth to us spiritual Life, so he also giveth us spiritual Discernment and Knowledge. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God*; and such we all of us are of our selves, till transformed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost: we naturally apprehend and pursue the Things of this Life, Freedom from Pain, and Safety from Danger, the Possession of Wealth, or Honour, or Power, are the Things which as natural Men we value and seek after; and as our Nature inclineth us to a Complacence in them, so the Enjoyment of them endeareth them to us, and maketh us contract firmer Alliances with them; but spiritual Things we cannot relish or apprehend, without the Aid and Assistance of some higher Principle; we have no Disposition to entertain or pursue them, but they are (as the Apostle wordeth it) *Foolishness* unto us. To deny
our

Vol. III. our selves, and take up our Cross ; to
 ~~~~~ cut off the right Hand, and pluck out the  
 right Eye ; to mortify our Members  
 which are upon Earth, and crucify the  
 Flesh with its Affections and Lusts ; to  
 bless them that curse us, and do good to  
 them that hate us ; to believe such Myste-  
 ries as are incomprehensible, upon ac-  
 count of the Testimony of God the Re-  
 vealer ; these are hard Sayings which we  
 cannot tell how to bear with, unless God  
 by his Holy Spirit prepareth our Minds,  
 and removeth from thence all Pride and  
 Prejudice ; and our Hearts are mollified  
 by an Unction from that Holy One, who  
 alone by a sweet but uncontrollable Vi-  
 olence, can bring our Sense and our Rea-  
 son in subjection to our Faith.

3. HAVING thus given us Life and a  
 true Insight into Matters, he proceed-  
 eth next to impart to us such Strength  
 and Vigour, as may enable us to practise  
 according to our Knowledge : for we are  
 not only, as mere Men, dull to conceive,  
 and blind to discern, what is good and  
 profitable for us to aim at ; but we are  
 also weak and impotent, indisposed and  
 incapable to perform our Duty ; though  
 our Spirit may be willing, yet our Flesh  
 most certainly is weak ; and though to  
 will may be present with us, yet *how to*  
 do

do that which is good, we find not. Our Reason is of it self too feeble, and insufficient to encounter and baffle such a Number of Enemies, as confederate together to assault or to ensnare it ; it is not easy to stem the Tide of our overflowing Passions, or to despise the Allurements and the Threatnings of this World ; it is difficult for us to get loose from that Law in our Members, which is continually warring against the Law of our Mind, and bringing *us into Captivity to the Law of Sin* : in the midst of so many and so great Dangers, we must fly to the Assistance of this Holy Spirit, and betake ourselves for Support to this powerful Comforter ; who infuseth Courage into our Souls, and girdeth us with Strength unto the Battle ; who carrieth us through all the Changes and Chances of the Warfare, and enableth us in all Things to be more than Conquerors.

4. As this Holy Spirit is a vital Principle within us, as he enlightneth our Minds with spiritual Understanding, and inclineth us and qualifyeth us both to will and to do. As he thus sheddeth upon us his general Influence ; so doeth he particularly infuse into us such special Graces, as may make us *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called* ; these Fruits

Vol. III. *of the Spirit*, as the Apostle stileth them, he reckoneth up to us in the Fifth of the *Galatians*; where he telleth us that they are the valuable Accomplishments of Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance: He then dilateth our enlarged Hearts with sacred Love; and lighteth up within them the comfortable Flames of Zeal towards our God, and Charity towards our Brethren: He filleth us with a Joy that is solid and substantial; such as nothing in this World can occasion, nor any thing in Nature can diminish: He fixeth our inward *Peace* upon so sure a Bottom, as to be free from all *Variableness*, or *shadow of turning*; having the God of Peace for its immoveable Foundation: He engageth us to that Long-suffering towards our offending Brethren, which protecteth us from the Torture of a revengeful Mind; at once resembling us to our merciful Creator, and making us tender and compassionate to our Fellow-creatures: He inspireth us with such a Gentleness, as obligeth all that we converse with; and sweetneth them by such Charms as are irresistible, into a Temper as complying and sociable as our own: He imparteth to us that Goodness which giveth us an Opportunity of being



being generally beneficial to all Mankind, and enriching others with the Advantages we enjoy: By him our Faith is settled upon so stedfast a Foundation, that nothing can shock its well-grounded Assurance; and therefore it flourisheth with Life and Vigour, and springeth up in constant Acts of Piety: To his kind Influence we owe that Meekness, which, by making us judge meanly of our selves, still spurreth us on to more commendable Performances, and by only seeming to depress us, exalteth us to a higher degree of Value and Esteem. From him we learn to observe that Temperance, by which we are qualified for the Presence of God, which is only prepared for the Pure in Heart; and fitted for a Station in that everlasting Kingdom into which no unclean thing shall be allowed to enter. Thus doeth he lead us on from one Virtue to another, and conducteth us gradually *from Strength to Strength*; till in the Spirit of Adoption we can cry *Abba, Father*, and are sealed as God's Children to the Day of Redemption.

THIS then is the Comforter which was promised to be sent to us, and these are those Instances in which we may perceive, that he doeth still abide with the Church of Christ, and will continue to

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do

Vol.III. do so till the End of the World, And  
 ~~~~~ now if there are any in such miserable  
 Circumstances, as to question the Truth
 of what is here asserted, because they are
 insensible of the Operations of God's Spi-
 rit; if they feel no Principles of new
 Life within them, if their Understanding
 is darkned as to heavenly Things, if their
 Practices are contrary to the Maxims of
 Christianity, and they have no share in
 those Fruits of the Spirit which he boun-
 tifully bestoweth upon the elect People of
 God; let them seriously consider, that if
 these Things are hid, they are only *hid to*
them that are lost; in whom the God of
this World hath blinded their Minds, lest
the Light of these glorious Truths should
shine unto them: Let them reflect, that if
 they have no part nor lot in this Matter,
 it is because their *Hearts are not right in*
the sight of God; being led away accord-
 ing to the Course of this World, by the
 Spirit that worketh in the Children of Dis-
 obedience; and that it doeth not follow
 from hence, that God's Holy Spirit is
 not present to his Church; but that they
 have no Fellowship with the Church of
 God, being looked upon by him as Hea-
 thens or as Aliens: it will behove such
 People to apply warmly to themselves,
 St. Paul's passionate Exhortation to the
 Corin-

Corinthians ; *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith ; prove your own selves ; know ye not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you (by the Workings of his Spirit) except ye be Reprobates ?* Let us then sweep, and wash, and garnish our House, that this blessed Spirit of Holiness and Purity may come unto us, and make his abode with us : Let us cleanse our Hearts in the Blood of the Lamb, that they may be fit Receptacles for so spotless an Inhabitant ; let us earnestly invite this Holy Guest into us, by our Prayers to him who hath faithfully promised, that he *will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it* ; and above all things, let us take care that we do not shut him out, by a supine Neglect or a rude Resistance : Let us not grieve him by wilful and deliberate Offences, nor quench him by the coldness of the Reception which we give him : but by submitting to his Rules, and laying hold of his Assistance, let us prevail upon him to be truly our Comforter, to make our Souls his Temple, that so he may abide with us for ever.

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To him, with the Father and the Son, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.



SERMON XXXIX.

The Happiness of being
found blameless at Christ's
Coming.

1 THESS. v. part of Verse 23.

*And I pray God, your whole Spirit, and
Soul, and Body be preserved blame-
less unto the Coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ.*

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THE Holy Apostle, towards
the latter end of this Chap-
ter, prescribeth several short
but very edifying Rules, in or-
der to qualify his *Thessalonian*
Converts for the discharging their Duty
in many particular considerable Instances.

as namely at the 12th Verse he beseecheth *Serm.*
them, in the first Place, to know them XXXIX.
which labour among them, and rule over
them in the Lord, and admonish them,
esteeming them very highly in Love for
their Work's sake: that is, That they
should have a due regard for their spiri-
tual Directors, who are to govern them
in things relating unto God; that they
should carefully attend to their Exhor-
tations and Instructions, and calmly re-
ceive their Admonitions and Reproofs;
not weighing so much their personal Ac-
complishments or Imperfections, as the
Character which they bear of being *La-*
bourers in God's Vineyard, and the Obliga-
tion which lieth upon them of loving them
on that account. He then farther ad-
viseth them, *to be at peace among them-*
selves; to warn them which are unruly,
to comfort the feeble-minded, to support
the weak, and to be patient toward all
Men: that is, that they should keep the
Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace,
and accommodate themselves to the dif-
ferent Necessities of their Brethren;
either commending or rebuking them, as
occasion offereth, and conversing with
all People in the Spirit of Meekness. He
next exhorteth them, *not to render Evil*
for Evil, but ever to follow that which is
good;

Vol.III. good; to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks for every thing: that is, that they should not be of a revengeful Temper, too sensible of Injuries, and too ready to return them; but always studying the Good of others, and using their utmost Endeavours to promote it, by which they will secure their own Innocence, and not suffer their Passion to break in upon it: That let their Condition be what it will, they should still keep up their Interest in God; by praying constantly for his Protection, and returning due Acknowledgments for his manifold Blessings. He then goeth on to counsel them farther, *Neither to quench the Spirit, nor to despise Prophecys; but to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good:* That is, that they should close with all the Advantages which God affordeth them, and improve every Motion of his Holy Spirit; giving a due Attention to the Revelations of his Will, and to the careful Expositions of his Ministers upon it; that they should cautiously examine, whatever is thus proposed to them; and being convinced of its Excellency, should adhere to it immoveably. And, then to conclude, he earnestly requireth, *That they would abstain from all appearance of Evil:* that is, That

That they would not suffer themselves to be seduced into an Opinion, that some Sins are small, excuseable, or trivial ; nor approach too near to the Boundaries of Good and Evil ; but keeping at a due distance from whatever seemeth amiss, might guard themselves from even the remotest danger of Transgressing. And now having thus in those distinct Lessons which he there teacheth them, laid down the short *Items* of those several Performances, which are necessary to compleat their Christian Character ; he summeth them all up in a comprehensive Petition, *That the God of Peace would sanctify them wholly* : that God, who alone can give Serenity to their Minds, and maintain a free Intercourse of brotherly Love amongst them, would enable them to discharge their Duty, in these various Particulars which he had been recommending, and not leave them destitute of any of those Graces which should accomplish and adorn their holy Profession. And then at last, he both explaineth and repeateth his Prayer in their Behalf, in the Words of my Text which immediately follow ; *And I pray God, saith he, your whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Serm.
XXXIX.
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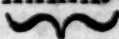
Vol.III. BEFORE I enter upon an Enquiry into those Doctrines, which the Substance of these Words will plainly afford us ; I shall briefly examine what the Apostle meaneth, by those several Expressions he here maketh use of.

First, WHAT is meant by *the whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body*.

Secondly, WHAT by *their being preserved blameless*.

Thirdly, WHAT by *the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

First THEN, I am to examine what is here meant by *the whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body* ; and here I shall not enter upon a useless Examination of the several Interpretations which have been given of them ; but, waving all others, shall entertain you with that single one, which appeareth to me to be most just and reasonable : For understanding of which we must have recourse to the Original ; where the Phrase is somewhat different from our *English* Version, and letteth us in more fully to the Knowledge of the Sense. The Apostle wordeth it Ὁλόκληρον ὑμῶν, *the whole of you* ; in which Expression he first maketh mention of the entire Man, before he divideth it into its constituent Parts, which he afterwards assigneth to be *Spirit, and Soul, and Body* ;
and

and this, as I hinted to you before, is an Serm.
Explication of the foregoing Wish, that XXXIX.
God would be pleased to sanctify them wholly. 

By the *Spirit* then we are to understand that nobler Part which is enlightned by Grace, and thereby made conformable to the Nature of God; which is rendered capable of a Union with him, and is under the Influence of a lively Faith: By the *Soul* must be signified that Part of the natural Man, in which his intellectual Faculties exercise themselves, and perform their Operations under the Direction of Reason: and by the *Body* is here meant that fleshly Part of him, about which the Appetites and Affections are chiefly conversant, and range themselves tumultuously under the Banner of Sense. For these, as *Irenæus* expressly informeth us, compose the *ὅλον ἀνθρώπου*, or *whole of Man*; when he tells us, that there are three things of which the entire perfect Man consisteth, the Flesh (or Body) the Soul, and the Spirit. But,

Secondly, LET us consider what is here meant by *their being preserved blameless*. And here we must not imagine, that in this State of Imperfection they can arrive at a Condition that is absolutely perfect; the Spirit and Soul can never obtain so total a Conquest over the Body,
but

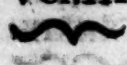
Vol. III. but that it will sometimes rebel, and dispute, and call in Question their Authority: nor can they themselves be free from all blot and blemish, since *in many things we offend all*: But only such a degree of Perfection is implied, as may be consistent with our manifold Infirmities; which either being small and pardonable in themselves, or, if otherwise, atoned for by a sincere Repentance, will render us excusable, and consequently unblameable in the Sight of that God, *who is not extreme to mark what is done amiss, and graciously considereth that we are but Dust.* But,

Thirdly, LET us examine what is meant by *the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This either relateth to what the Apostle mentioneth of our Saviour's *Coming* to execute Vengeance upon the *Jewish Nation*, in that signal Destruction of their City and their Temple, which happened not long after under *Titus Vespasian*, and which is hinted at in the beginning of this Chapter; or to that more dreadful Solemnity of his Coming to Judgment, attended by his Holy Angels at the End of the World. In the former Case he had promised to make a Distinction, by rescuing his faithful Followers from the common Calamity; which he made good by removing them to a Place of Security:

and in the latter he will separate his *Serm.*
 Sheep from the Goats, and give them an *XXXIX.*
 entrance into *the Joy of their Lord.* And
 here give me leave to stop, and to take
 notice, how elegantly the Apostle hath
 induced all these Precepts which he re-
 commendeth to his *Thessalonians* in the
 foregoing Verses, in this summary Prayer
 with which he concludeth; and from
 thence to observe the Connexion which is
 between them, and the just Dependence
 which my Text hath upon them. When
 he prayeth that their *Spirit may be pre-*
served blameless, he alludeth to the Re-
 gard and Attention due to their Teachers,
 who are to instruct them in all spiritual
 Knowledge, and confirm them in the
 Principles of a saving Faith: When he
 speaketh of *preserving the Soul blameless,*
 he hath a respect to their Behaviour to-
 wards their Christian Brethren, with
 whom they were to converse under their
 several Circumstances; and either to en-
 courage or admonish them, according to
 those Rules which Reason prescribed to
 them: and the *preserving the Body blame-*
less is included in their being to *abstain*
from all appearance of Evil, or the not
 giving way to the Allurements of *Sense.*

AND now the Scope of my Text being
 thus fully illustrated, the Sense of it
 may

Vol. III. may be enlarged after this manner: The

 Apostle having advised his *Thessalonian* Disciples to the Practice of such Duties as he thought convenient for them; at length prayeth that God would by the Influence of his Grace preserve the nobler Powers of their enlightned Mind or Spirit, the rational Faculties of their Soul, and the sensitive Appetites which affect the Body, in such a due degree of Innocence and Perfection, as may render them acceptable in the Sight of God; and thereby entitle them to Protection under worldly Calamities, and Salvation in the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

FROM the Words thus explained and set in a true Light, I shall draw the two following Considerations, as the useful Subject of my present Discourse.

I. I SHALL enquire into the Means and Method, by which our *whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body may be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And,

II. I SHALL insist upon the vast Advantages, which will be the happy Consequences of such a Proceeding.

I. THEN I am to enquire into the Means and Method, by which *our whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body may be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* xxxix.

OUR Christian Philosophers mention two sorts of Lives, of which one or other must be the Scene of our Actions; and they distinguish them by the Terms of Divine and Animal. The divine Life consisteth in a Resemblance of God, and the practice of such Virtues as are pleasing in his Sight; in a constant Imitation of our Blessed Saviour, and walking in the Path which he hath trod before us; in avoiding all carnal and sensual Pollutions, and *perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.* The Animal Life is what we have in common with Brutes, which partaketh of their Nature and Inclinations; which, without any Regard to our Duty, as we are Men, and designed, in our Creation, for much higher Entertainments, mindeth only the Satisfaction of the beastly Part within us, the sordid Gratification of our fleshly Lusts and Appetites! And they farther assign a Station between these two, to that which they call the Middle Life; comprehending within its Sphere the Exercise of Reason,
and

Vol. III. and all the noble Operations which flow from it. Now this Middle Condition, which is that of the meer Man, whom we must consider as a free and reasonable Agent, is such a State of Indifferency in it self, that it may unite it self with either of the other two; and so the Soul may either ascend up into the Spirit, or sink down into the Body; and, according as it determineth its Election in this Case, may either elevate or debase its own Circumstances. If, by the Seriousness of his own Reflections, and the never-wanting Assistance of God's good Spirit, the well-informed Christian taketh a steady Resolution to close with that superior Life, which we call *Divine*, and which consisteth in the Exercise of spiritual Graces; then all the Faculties of his reasonable Soul will, in a due Subordination to Faith and Revelation, be sublimated, and exalted to a higher Degree, than their natural Abilities could possibly advance them. His Reason will distinguish Things with the utmost Clearness, shining brightly within him as the Candle of the Lord, and approaching very near to the Intuition of Angels; he will be enabled to weigh Things without Prejudice or Prepossession; to embrace Truth wheresoever it discovereth it self;

self; and, instead of cavelling at the Mysteries of Religion, as it is too much the Practice of the corrupt Age we live in, to draw Arguments from the Goodness and Veracity of God, for a steadfast and immoveable Assent to them; he will be inclined to contemplate the Perfections of his Almighty Creator, and delight himself in considering the Works of his Hands; to be convinced of the vast Moment of Piety and Religion, and that it is his Interest, as well as Duty, to be conversant in their Ways: His Will shall be no longer biassed to the wrong Side, or engaged in the Pursuit of empty Vanities; but its Tendency shall be towards the best and noblest Objects, to the Pursuit and Enjoyment of real Good; Virtue shall appear to him so justly desirable, and Vice so ignominious and detestable, that he cannot hesitate which of them to choose, but the former of Necessity must weigh down the Balance. The great Example of the Holy Jesus, in whom the Divine Life most eminently triumphed, will engage and encourage him to follow his Steps; and he will continually go on from Strength to Strength, till unto the God of gods he appear in Sion. Thus will he, by his Union with the Divine Life, and by the gracious

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XXXIX.

Vol. III. gracious Illuminations and Assistances of
 ~~~~~ God's Spirit, which are the happy Con-  
 sequences of that Union; improve the  
 several Faculties of his rational Soul into  
 such a State as is celestial and angelical;  
 and this Middle Life, of which we have  
 been treating, which is that of the natu-  
 ral and reasonable Man, will be swallow-  
 ed up of the Life, which is divine and  
 spiritual, and ingrafted and incorporated  
 into that. But if, on the contrary, he is  
 so thoughtless and inconsiderate, as per-  
 versely to reject the sufficient Grace of  
 God, and blindly close with the inferior,  
 or animal Life; the Light of his Under-  
 standing will be most miserably clouded,  
 and all the Powers of his Soul will lose  
 their native Excellency. His Reason,  
 which was capable of such notable Im-  
 provements, will then become a Slave  
 to Sense, and will by that be put upon  
 the meanest Employments; either with  
 a racking Expence of Thoughts, to serve  
 the Ends of Pride and Ambition; or with  
 vexatious Contrivances and Cares, to pro-  
 mote the Interest of Avarice or Prodigal-  
 ity; or with specious Pretences and  
 plausible Artifices, to varnish over the  
 Foulness of Luxury and Debauchery:  
 Or perhaps in a higher Degree of Im-  
 piety, to ridicule Religion, profane the  
 Gospel,

Gospel, sit in the Scorners' Chair with Sermon.  
Deists and Free-thinkers; *treasuring up* XXXIX.  
*for himself Wrath against the Day of*  
*Wrath*, whereby he may receive greater  
Damnation: His Will, whose Choice is  
of such Importance, that it stampeth a  
Character upon all his Actions, will  
be brought into Captivity to the Obe-  
dience of Sin, and incline it self to  
the Election of what that dictateth; it  
will then have no relish of any thing  
but what sense presenteth to it; and the  
Flesh and the World will be its only  
Counsellors; the seeming Good will al-  
lure it, instead of the substantial; what  
is pleasant or profitable, instead of what  
is just and righteous. Thus, by uniting  
himself with the Animal Life, he will  
not only lose the Privileges which he  
might have acquired on the other Side,  
but will depress and diminish his ra-  
tional Abilities, and degenerate into a  
Condition that is despicable and brutal.  
And here let us observe, that as the  
natural Man's best Faculties, the highest  
Degree of Wit or Understanding, if un-  
happily misapplied to the Service of  
Sense, become only Weapons of Un-  
righteousness; so much meaner Capa-  
cities and Endowments; if directed ar-  
right to the Service of the Spirit, may

Vol. III. produce the most glorious and comfortable Effects. How much then have those hardened Wretches to answer for, who pervert their great Parts to the Dishonour of their God; disputing his Revelations, and striking at his Being! How justly may they exult with spiritual Joy, who employ their weak Parts for the Promotion of his Glory; and for the exalting of his Honour, whose humble Instruments they are! By this then we see plainly that our natural Faculties are not capable of themselves to give a sufficient Assistance, for making our Gospel-calling and Election sure; and our Reason is not able to account singly for the weighty Doctrines of Faith and Revelation. In vain then shall we depend upon that, for qualifying every private Man to be a Judge and an Interpreter, in respect of those Maxims which relate to Salvation. And now, when two such different Schemes are proposed to any Man; the one so highly to his Advantage, and the other so very much to his Prejudice; one would imagine that a Creature, endued with Reason and Free-will, should make no manner of Doubt which of them he should close with: The Divine Life, one would justly imagine, could not fail to



to secure him in its Interests, with Serm. which his own are so inseparably united; <sup>xxxix.</sup> and the Animal Life should despair of engaging him, when it bideth him so considerably to his Loss. The conforming himself then to that Life which is divine, will be the certain Means to *preserve him blameless*, in his whole System of Spirit, and Soul, and Body; because the Spirit, which participateth of the heavenly Nature, having attracted, and assimilated the Soul to it self, the Body must of Consequence be kept under Discipline, by the due Regulation of their joint Influence: Thus the Spirit being enlightened by the Beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and sensible of the Power and Efficacy of Faith; and the Soul being conformable to the Dictates of that, and exerting in its Behalf all the Forces of right Reason; and the Body being obedient to the Dominion of them both, and submitting to their Guidance all the Appetites of Sense, there remaineth nothing more to compleat the happy Work, but the *ὅλον ἄνθρωπον*, or *whole Man*, will be innocent and unblameable. And now, having seen that the Divine Life alone is that by which we can be *preserved blameless*, in our whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, it will be necessary, before I dismiss this Point,

Vol.III. no instance in some of the most eminent Christian Graces; in which we must conspicuously exercise our selves, as an Evidence that we have attained to that happy Station: And these are such as shone most remarkably in our Saviour, the only perfect Pattern of the Divine Life; a profound Humility, a fervent Charity, and a spotless Purity: For wherever these are found in a due Proportion, they are the certain Marks and Indications of a regenerate Christian, or an un-fallen Angel. The first of these, Humility, by guarding us against Pride, or an over-weening Conceit of our own Self-sufficiency, will fit us for the Reception of those divine Impressions, which the Spirit of God vouchsafeth to communicate to our Spirit. The second, Charity, by defending us from Self-love, and Self-interest, will incline us to be universally beneficial; and to promote the Good of all our Brethren, with the utmost Intention and Vigour of our Soul: And the third, Purity, by securing us against all manner of Uncleannefs; will subdue and keep under our fleshly Lusts, and make our Body become the Temple of the Holy Ghost. And therefore, by the practice of these three Graces, which our Saviour's Example so fully recommend-eth

eth to us, we shall be thoroughly qualified to discharge our Duty to God, our Neighbour, and our selves, which taketh in the full Extent of all our Actions; and by so doing shall *preserve the whole Man blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And this bringeth me to the Consideration of,

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II. My second Proposition, in which I am to insist upon the vast Advantages, which will be the happy Consequences of such a Proceeding. And these I shall very briefly consider under the two following Heads:

1. BY this Means we shall secure to our selves God's Favour and Protection, when he cometh to visit the Earth with his Judgments. And,

2. BY this Means we shall be entitled to eternal Happiness, at the great and solemn Day of Retribution.

1. THEN, by this Means, I say, we shall secure to our selves God's Favour and Protection, when he cometh to visit the Earth with his Judgments.

WHEN the Wickedness of any People arriveth at such a Pitch, as to fill up the Measure of their Iniquities, and to make them ripe for the divine Vengeance; when God's Forbearance and Long-suf-



Vol. III. fering are quite tired out, and the Fierceness of his Anger waxeth hot against them, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy: Then will God watch over his own for good, who are thus *preserved blameless unto his Coming*, and, with his favourable Kindness, he will protect them as with a Shield. Thus when the four Angels, in the Revelation, were about to pour out the Vials of God's Wrath upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth and the Sea; another Angel calleth to them to hold their Hands, till the Servants of the Lord were sealed in their Foreheads, as a Mark of their Safety and Deliverance: And thus, when the *Jews* were devoted to Slaughter, and exposed to such Extremities in the Siege of *Jerusalem*, as were never paralleled, either before, or after; the Christians were warned by God to remove out of it, before it was blocked up by the *Roman Army*; and found a safe Retreat at the little Town of *Pella*, from the Fury and Insolence of those exasperated Conquerors. And, indeed, this is no more than may be expected from the Justice of God, as well as from his Mercy; to make a due Distinction where Circumstances are so different, and even in this World to divide the Sheep from the Goats; And  
when-

whenever it happeneth that he appeareth Serm.  
to act otherwise, in regard, I mean, of XXXIX.]  
some particular Persons, it is to answer  
some great Ends of his general Providence, and to magnify the unsearchable  
Depths of his Wisdom. For *shall not the*  
*Judge of all the Earth do right?* Far be  
it from him to do after that Manner;  
that the Righteous should be as the  
Wicked, that be far from him. But,  
besides this Indulgence, which he usually  
expresseth towards them, upon account  
of their Relation and Obedience to him,  
how duly prepared and qualified are  
those, who are sanctified in Spirit, and  
Soul, and Body, and thereby *preserved*  
*blameless* in their whole Composition;  
for bearing any Afflictions that may possi-  
bly befall them, and supporting them  
with Sereneness and Tranquillity of Mind!  
For that Peace of Conscience, of which  
they are possessed, will prove a happy  
Antidote against all the Misfortunes,  
with which they may encounter in this  
Vale of Misery; and will supply them  
with an inward Fund of Consolation,  
which may sustain them under the Pres-  
sure of all outward Calamities. This  
unblameable Innocence is an impregna-  
ble Fortrefs, to which they may betake  
themselves in the Time of Distress; and

Vol. III. *when Thousands shall fall at their Side, and ten Thousands at their right Hand, it shall not come nigh them; only (as the Psalmist goeth on) with their Eyes they shall behold, and see (as unmolested Spectators) the Reward of the Wicked.* And, indeed, this outward Protection of God, and these inward Refreshments of his Spirit, place such Persons in a Condition so comfortable and advantageous, that nothing in this World can make an Addition to it, and for the Improvement of it they must pass into another; in which such glorious Entertainments are provided for them, as neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard; nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man fully to conceive. For,

2. THOSE who have been preserved blameless, in Spirit, and Soul, and Body, shall be entitled to everlasting Happiness, at the great and solemn Day of Retribution.

AND this is that Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, at which the Divine Life will be compleatly perfected; and those Seeds of Immortality, which were sown upon Earth, will spring up and increase into a plentiful Harvest. How will that Humility, which made them think heretofore



fore so meanly, both of themselves Serm.  
and their Performances; give a vast XXXIX.  
Addition to that Glory, which shall  
then be revealed in them; when they  
see themselves ranked with Martyrs and  
Confessors; and receive, at the Lord's  
Hands, a Crown of Righteousness, which  
the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give  
them in that Day! How will that Cha-  
rity, which made them formerly re-  
joice so heartily, in any the least Ad-  
vantage of their Fellow-Christians, cause  
their Hearts to overflow with Ecstasies  
of Joy, when they see themselves sur-  
rounded with Saints and Angels; and  
find their own Happiness multiplied and  
augmented by the affectionate Share they  
take in the Felicity of others! How  
will that Purity, which made them  
carefully shun whatsoever might defile  
their unspotted Innocence, afford them  
the highest Satisfaction and Complacency,  
in the unblemished Society of  
*just Men made perfect*; and the delightful  
Company of those immaculate Vir-  
gins, who follow the Lamb whithersoever  
he goeth! And how will these several  
Branches of the Divine Life, which  
brought forth such pleasant Fruit, even  
in an earthly Plantation, flourish like a  
green

Vol.III. green Olive-Tree in the House of our  
 ~~~~~ God, when transplanted into a Soil so agreeable to their Nature! Then will the Spirit have an enlarged Comprehension of those Attributes of God, and Mysteries of Religion, which it knew before but darkly, and in part: Then will the Soul exert its noblest Faculties, in contemplating the infinite Perfections of the chief Good, and the unspeakable Raptures of the beatifick Vision: Then will the Body, being spiritualized, and fashioned nearly towards the Substance of immaterial Beings, direct all its Sensations and refined Appetites to such Objects, as may justify their most earnest Application: And thus the whole Man, which hath been *preserved blameless*, shall continue happy to all Eternity; and shall enter upon an indefeisable Possession of infinite Felicity; when those Days of refreshing shall come, from before the Presence of our God. I cannot close up what I have said with any thing more pathetical or affectionate than the Words of my Text, and therefore with them I shall conclude my Discourse; *I pray God, that your whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, may be preserved blameless*

blameless at Christ's Coming:

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less unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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To whom with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.



SERMON

Let us be thankful for the Lord's goodness to us, and for his mercies to our souls.



SERMON XL.

Publick Thankfulness due
for Publick Deliverances.

PSAL. CXXIV. 6, 7.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a Prey to their Teeth.

Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowlers; the Snare is broken, and we are escaped.

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HIS Day hath been deservedly set apart, these many Years, for the solemn, devout, and publick Commemoration of an extraordinary Mercy vouchsafed unto these Kingdoms: The pious Grati-

Gratitude of our Church, not thinking fit that so important a Blessing should be forgotten almost as soon as received; or that the devout Flames of our Zeal and Gratitude should be extinguished with the Bonfires and Illuminations: It rather designeth to recommend to us a perpetual Thankfulness, in Imitation of the Royal Psalmist, who made it the Employment of his whole Life, according as he testifieth of himself; *Whilst I live, will I give Thanks unto the Lord; I will praise my God whilst I have my Being.* And, indeed, that Deliverance, which at present exacteth our pious Tribute of Praises and Thanksgivings, is scarcely to be paralleled in any History; and I cannot but avow, that, in my small reading, I never met with any Design so devilishly contrived, so universally destructive in its Intention; so very nearly brought to the Time of Execution, or discovered so suddenly and surprizingly, as that which giveth Occasion to this Day's Solemnity: Unless therefore we are wholly unaffected with remote Mercies, though never so remarkable, unless we are insensible of all those Blessings, whereof we our selves are not the immediate Partakers; we cannot but break out, upon the present Occasion, into
David's

Vol. III. *David's holy Rapture of Joy and Thankfulness; Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a Prey to their Teeth: Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowlers; the Snare is broken, and we are escaped.* That therefore our Gratitude may, in some Measure, be equal to its Cause, and bear a due Proportion to those Blessings which occasion it; I shall, in the current of my present Discourse, insist upon these three following Particulars.

I. I SHALL consider the Greatness of those Benefits, which it pleased God (as at this Time) to impart unto these Nations.

II. I SHALL prove, that such a Consideration ought to oblige us to a devout Thankfulness.

III. I SHALL shew after what Manner this our devout Thankfulness ought to be expressed.

I. THEN, I shall consider the Greatness of those Benefits, which it pleased God (as at this Time) to impart unto these Nations.

EVER since the happy Reformation of our Religion (by which the Gospel was restored amongst us to its ancient Purity)

Purity) the Gates of Hell have been continually attempting upon our Church; though they have never been able to prevail against it, because *it was founded upon a Rock*. Frequent have been the Endeavours of *Romish* Emissaries, against the Lives of our most zealous Defenders of the Faith; indefatigably hath their Malice been levelled against the most eminent of our Nobility and Clergy, who have been the firm Pillars and Supporters of it; studiously have they affected to root out, or to corrupt such of our Gentry and our Commonalty, as have appeared most vigorously to uphold and sustain it; but never did their Malice strike at all together, but in the damnable Contrivance, which we are now about to consider. The Royal Person of our King, and his most hopeful Issue; the whole Body of the Nobility, both Spiritual and Temporal; the numerous Assembly of Patriots convened in Parliament; in a Word, the whole Nation in the Persons of its Representatives, was jointly devoted to Ruin and Destruction! Neither the Majesty of the Prince, nor the Piety and venerable Character of the Bishops, nor the high Quality of the Peers, nor the Integrity of the Judges, nor the Honesty and Popularity of the Knights

Vol. III. Knights and Burgeſſes, could, in the
 ~~~~~ least; affect thoſe unchriſtian Hearts, who  
 were helliſhly bent upon the Slaughter  
 of them all; and that by a Way, of all  
 others, the moſt dreadful and ſurprizing!  
 Such as ſhould carry with it unavoidable  
 Ruin; and leave no manner of Poſſibi-  
 lity; either of arming againſt it, or eſca-  
 ping from it: Such as would not allow  
 of a laſt Prayer, or parting Ejaculation, to  
 recommend themſelves to God; but muſt  
 to too many (whom we may, without  
 any Breach of Charity, ſuppoſe, in ſuch  
 a Multitude, to be unprepared for Death)  
 have brought Deſtruction, at once, both  
 on Soul and Body. And how very miſe-  
 rable had been the Conſequences of this  
 moſt damnable Contrivance, if the divine  
 Goodneſs had not interpoſed, and turn-  
 ed away the Blow, which would elſe  
 have cruſhed us into nothing! There  
 had not been ſo much as the Shadow of  
 Government left in this unhappy Nation,  
 unleſs what our Enemies had been pleaſed  
 to erect, out of the Ruins of the former:  
 The *Britiſh* Liberty had been trampled  
 under Foot; and we our ſelves, who think  
 our ſelves, perhaps, not at all concerned  
 in this diſtant Mercy, had been born the  
 Slaves of inſulting Maſters! The Purity  
 of our Profeſſion had been over-run  
 again

again with Popish Ignorance and Superstition; we had been educated and bred up in Blindness and Idolatry, and should not have been sensible of our sad Condition, till Death had convinced us of it, by a fatal Experiment; and our Eyes had been opened in another World. And all this was so very near us, that but a few Hours were wanting to its Accomplishment! So closely was it laid, and so covertly was it managed, that there was not so much as the least Suspicion of the Design. It was high Time then for God to set to his Hand, to infatuate the Counsel of our Enemies, and make them the Discoverers of their own Contrivances: He gave unto the King the Spirit of Wisdom, to enable him to unravel the dark Hints which they gave; and directed those that were appointed to search, to find out their Magazine of Death and Destruction, though concealed with a Conduct that can scarce be paralleled. I touch but slightly upon these Particulars, because the History, both of our Danger and our Deliverance, is so very notorious, that I cannot suppose its most minute Circumstances to be at this Time unknown to any *Englishman*.

BUT, as if this Day had been chosen out by Providence, to be for ever celebrated in  
 8 the



Vol. III. the *English* Calendar; it is not only remarkable for that single Blessing, which I have been endeavouring to revive within your Memories; but God hath pleased to make the devout Observance of it a Duty yet stronger, and more incumbent upon us, by disappointing the later and no less formidable Attempts, which the same inveterate Enemies have been making upon us since. However horrid and malicious the former Design was, yet it had the Modesty to screen it self in Darkness; it retired and pitched upon an obscure Corner, as the fittest Scene for such a dismal Tragedy: But the fresher Designs against our holy Religion, the more modern Attacks upon our Lives and Liberties, were carried on with a Management that was open and barefaced. That Superstition and Idolatry, which was thought effectually to have been rooted out, was not only creeping in again silently and secretly, but insulted and domineered in our very Streets. Then the Almighty interposed for his Church's Preservation, with an unexpected and undeserved Miracle of Mercy: He stirred up the Spirit of our late most gracious King, and raised him for our Deliverer and Benefactor; who, regardless of the Rigour of so boisterous a Season,

son,

son, undaunted by the Numbers which were ready to oppose him, unshocked at the Greatness and Uncommonness of the Attempt, and undismayed by the Fury of a most dreadful Tempest, did, as at this Time, arrive in Safety in our Harbours, and without Bloodshed, or the other usual Effects of Violence, hath consecrated this Day, and made it famous in our Annals, by a second glorious and wonderful Deliverance. Certainly a Reflection upon such accumulated Mercies must dispose us all, unless we are stupidly ungrateful, to bless the Lord, who *hath not given us over as a Prey unto their Teeth.* And this leadeth me,

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XL.

II. To the second general Head of my Discourse; namely, to prove that such Considerations, as we have just now been employed upon, should oblige us all to a devout Thankfulness.

I SHALL therefore recommend the Practice of this Duty, from these three following Motives, which may forcibly induce us to it.

1. THE Performance of it is attended with no manner of Difficulty.

2. THE Exercise of it is extremely comfortable. And,

3. THE Event of it is exceeding profitable.

S 2

I. THEN,

Vol.III. 1. THEN, this Duty of Praise, or a devout Thankfulness, is a Duty whose Performance is attended with no manner of Difficulty.

THE ancient Way of Oblations and Sacrifices was troublesome and expensive, and could not always be performed, nor by all Persons; but no Time is too short, no Place too narrow, no Fortune too mean, for the Duty of Thanksgiving; they that have not Leisure, or Convenience, or Ability, to make more substantial Returns, can sure pretend no manner of Excuse for the Omission of praising God: We are none of us so busy, when we receive a Mercy, but we may (as the Custom of the Primitive Christians was) say at least, *The Lord be praised*; or join with the *Psalmist* in his Doxology, *Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us over as a Prey unto their Teeth*. A poor Requital, indeed, for Mercies so great, and so many, so freely bestowed, so frequently repeated, and so long continued! But our God is pleased with a thankful Heart; and how inexcusable then shall he be at the last, who, out of Pride, or Carelessness, shall refuse him this? The easier the Duty is, and the less Difficulty there is in its Performance, the greater is the Sin of those  
I who



who do omit it, and the heavier shall be their Condemnation. But, Serm. XL.

2. THIS Duty of Praise, or a devout Thankfulness, is a Duty whose Exercise is extremely comfortable. To reflect upon our Sins as in Repentance, upon our Wants as in Prayer, upon our Duty as in hearing the Word of God, may seem to have some shew of Trouble in them; because the first bringeth our Infirmities into our Remembrance; the second remindeth us of our Necessities; and the third giveth us a Hint of our Dependence and Subjection; but to behold the Goodness and Mercy of our heavenly Father, to recount the innumerable Favours he hath conferred upon us, and to hope for the Continuance and Increase of them, in which the whole Duty of Praise is comprehended, this is nothing else but the Quintessence of Delight, the very Height of Pleasure and Satisfaction. *It is a good Thing to sing Praises unto our God; yea, a joyful and a pleasant Thing it is to be thankful; my Soul shall be satisfied, as it were, with Marrow and Fatness, when my Mouth praiseth thee with joyful Lips, saith holy David, the great Master of this blessed Exercise. This is the pleasanter Part of all Piety, and is therefore the Employment of Hea-*

Vol.III. ven it self; the Inhabitants of which Place make their Happiness to consist in beholding the Goodness, and in singing the Praises of Almighty God; they therefore, who can take no Pleasure in this Duty, are Strangers to the Joys of those blessed Souls, and unfit for those Regions of eternal Happiness. But,

3. THIS Duty of Praise, or a devout Thankfulness, is a Duty whose Event is exceeding profitable. This Duty, when exercised as it ought, bringeth Glory to God, and Benefit to our Neighbours; it publisheth his Goodness, and discovereth to all Men the Beauty of his Mercy; so that it engageth others to admire and to love him; and Religion is never more truly attractive, than when it is exercised in the divine Praises. But if Self-interest be most prevalent with us, and we would know what Good we our selves shall reap by praising God, let us consider, that our frequent Exercise of this great Duty will increase our Love to our heavenly Father, confirm our Faith in him, and inflame our Desires after the Enjoyment of him; it will expel our Fears, and revive our Hopes; quicken our Care to please him, and awaken our Anger against every thing that is displeasing to him. And besides these Conveniencies,  
which

which relate unto the Soul, there are also Serm.  
temporal Advantages which spring from XL.  
this Duty ; for there is not a more ready  
Way, to have any Blessing continued  
or increased, than to praise God heartily  
for the Reception of it ; he that blesteth  
the Lord for a lesser Mercy, hath moved  
one Step towards the Attainment of a  
greater ; and he that taketh the first so  
thankfully, is thereby qualified for the  
Reception of more. *Let the People praise  
thee, O God, saith David.* And what  
was the Consequence of this Acknow-  
ledgment ? *Then shall the Earth bring  
forth her Increase ; and God, even our own  
God, shall give us his Blessing.* Gratitude  
never faileth to meet with a Reward ;  
whereas, on the contrary, when we swal-  
low all we can get, and still gape for  
more, without ever acknowledging the  
Hand that supplieth us, we provoke God  
to take away even that which we had re-  
ceived ; and, by robbing him of his Ho-  
nour, we deprive our selves of our own  
Comfort : We cannot therefore think  
upon any thing, that more effectually  
promoteth either our Temporal or Spi-  
ritual Advantage, than this great Duty of  
Praise and Thanksgiving. If therefore  
we consider the Easiness of this Duty, or  
the Pleasantness of its Performance, or  
the



Vol. III. the Profitableness of its Event, it will  
 strongly inforce the Practice of it. There  
 is nothing more wanting, in order to its  
 Perfection, but that we take Care to  
 proceed, as we ought, in the Manifesta-  
 tion of our Gratitude and Acknowledg-  
 ment. And this leadeth me to the Consi-  
 deration of,

III. MY third General, namely, to  
 shew after what Manner this our devout  
 Thankfulness ought to be expressed.

I. THE first Part of our Care in this  
 Duty must be, that we choole a right  
 Object for this our Thankfulness; that  
 we ascribe the Glory of all our Blessings  
 to God alone, since he is certainly the  
 sole Author of them; and thus we find  
 the Royal Prophet expressing himself;  
*Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us  
 over as a Prey unto their Teeth.* We must  
 not let our Thoughts fix upon any second  
 Causes; we must not, with the proud  
*Assyrian*, arrogate the Praise and Honour  
 to our selves: It is from God only that  
 we expect Succour in our Distress, and  
 therefore to him only we ought to return  
 Thanks for our Deliverance. God be  
 praised, we are better instructed, than to  
 make our Supplications to any Saint or  
 Angel, for their Help or Assistance in  
 our

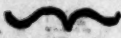
our Calamities; and as our Prayers are not to be addressed before-hand to any but to God, so neither must our Thanksgivings afterwards. It is but too usual, in Matters of War, to ascribe our Success to the Policy of the Leaders, or the Valour of the Soldiers; to the Advantages of Time or Place; or to any thing, indeed, rather than to God: It is too common amongst us, in Matters that relate to Civil Affairs, to impute their Prosperity to the prudent Management of our Concerns, to our own Wisdom or Sagacity; but as we must not in the former, with the vain *Egyptians*, worship our Shields; or, with the ruder *Scythians*, burn Incense to our Swords; so neither must we, in the latter sacrifice to our own Nets; but giving, as is due, the whole Honour of it to God, break out into a devout Acknowledgment, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but unto thy Name give Praise, for thy loving Mercy, and for thy Truth's sake.*

2. ANOTHER Part of our Care in this Duty must be, to proportion the Expressions of our devout Thankfulness to the Greatness of the Blessing which we have received.

WHEN God appeareth remarkably in our Behalf, he expecteth at our Hands  
such

Serm.

XL.

Vol. III. such a Return of Gratitude, as may be,  in some Measure, answerable to the Benefits he hath imparted; and therefore we can never be so thankful as we ought, unless we first duly weigh the Greatness of the Mercy, and then proportion our Acknowledgments accordingly; the Blessing, of which principally we are now discoursing, was one, indeed, of the first Magnitude. Did God ever give to any People a more signal Deliverance? that a Design, communicated to so many, should be carried on so long, with so inviolable a Secrecy, that it should arrive almost to the very Time of Execution, without any the least Umbrage or Suspicion of it; that then God should work a Tenderness in the Heart of one of them, towards one Nobleman, though they were all steeled against so many hundred Innocents; that by that Means a Deliverance should be wrought in the very critical Minute, when there was but just Time enough left to make sure of Safety! These, I say, are Circumstances which so highly enhance this Blessing, that it can scarcely be equalled in any Story; and yet such a prodigious Conception as this did our Enemies labour with, and, when it came to the very Moment of Birth, there was not Strength to bring it forth.



I COULD easily point out the same *Serm.*  
Footsteps of Providence in that other *XL.*  
great Blessing which signalizeth this Day;  
but that we, who have experienced them  
in our own Persons, cannot sure be so  
stupid as to stand in need of a Remem-  
brancer. Shall we then think it suffi-  
cient to be coldly affected with an indif-  
ferent Thankfulness, or weakly to pay a  
languishing Acknowledgment? No, my  
Brethren, the Return which God expect-  
eth must be vigorous and lively; suitable  
to the Power he hath exerted in our Be-  
half, and proportionable to the Good-  
ness he hath expressed in our Favour:  
And as these have had no other Bounds,  
but those of his Infinity, so must ours  
be limited by nothing but our own Im-  
potency; they must be strained to the  
utmost of our Ability, and our want of  
Power must be supplied by our Desires.

3. A THIRD Part of our Care in  
this Duty, must be to make this devout  
Thankfulness as publick and conspicuous  
as we can.

NOTHING can be a greater Instance  
of true Gratitude, than when we are  
willing to acknowledge our Obligation  
upon all Occasions, and to let others  
know how much we are beholden: This  
was the Method which the Royal Psalmist  
used

Vol. III. used (and we must constantly have Recourse unto him, for due Instructions in relation to this Duty) *Thou hast saved me, saith he, from the Hands of my Enemies, thou hast heard me from the midst of those that rose up against me; I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren, in the midst of the Congregation will I praise thee.* God doeth not delight to make his Blessings so narrow, as that they should be confined to that single Person, Family, or Nation, on whom they are more immediately conferred; he designeth that they should be communicated to others, that his Name may be glorious over all the Earth. The Intention and End of all God's miraculous Preservations are his own Glory, and the Good of others; neither of which Ends can be well promoted, unless the Expressions of Gratitude be publick and open; by these Means all that are acquainted with such signal Providences, will be powerfully perswaded to give Glory unto God, to magnify his holy Name for what he hath done unto others, and to rely upon him in relation to themselves. The Prophet *Isaiah* telleth us, that the Reason why God led his People through the Wilderness, with a mighty Hand, and an out-stretched Arm, was, that he might make unto himself a glo-

glorious Name; and it would be rather Robbery, than Gratitude, to endeavour to disappoint him of that End, by stifling his Mercies under a private Acknowledgment: But as this is the ready Way to give Glory unto God, so it is also to do Good to others and to our selves; to others, by inducing them to a Trust and Dependence upon him, whose Blessings are so signal, and his Deliverances so wonderful; to our selves, by intitling us to repeated Mercies; since the right Use of one is the Infallible Means of drawing down another! And thus we find it made use of by the Royal Psalmist; *I have not concealed thy loving Kindness and Truth from the great Congregation; therefore withhold not thou thy tender Mercies from me, O Lord; let thy loving Kindness and thy Truth continually preserve me.* But more especially where the Blessings have been publick and national, then must the Acknowledgment be general and universal, that all those who have been Sharers in the Benefits may be jointly concerned in the Return of Gratitude.

4. A FOURTH Part of our Care in this Duty must be, to strengthen our Faith, and confirm our Dependence upon the great Giver of all good Gifts.

SOME



**Vol. III.** SOME may, perhaps, ask us, as the *Per-  
sian* Emperor did the Prophet *Daniel*, *Is  
your God, whom you serve, continually a-  
ble to deliver you?* And we must be rea-  
dy to answer; with Comfort and Assu-  
rance, *God is our Refuge and Defence, a  
very present Help in Trouble.* We must  
not be cast down upon every Disap-  
pointment, nor dispirited and dishearten-  
ed upon every Prospect of Danger; but,  
by duly reflecting upon our former De-  
liverances, support our selves chearfully  
under whatsoever Afflictions, casting our  
Care upon the Lord, because we have  
had Experience that he careth for us.  
Every Blessing we have received, is the  
Earnest of a new one, unless we un-  
qualify our selves by Ingratitude and  
Distrust; and nothing can more hei-  
nously affront our God, or tempt him  
to leave us without his Assistance, than  
to call in question that Goodness, or  
that Power, which he hath so signally  
exerted in our Favour. Let us then,  
at all Times, possess our Souls in Pa-  
tience, and give up our selves willing-  
ly to his Guidance and Protection; this  
will be a Means to secure him on our  
Side; since God, who is jealous of his  
Honour, will never liken himself to the  
most infamous of Men, such as betray  
the

the Confidence of those who depend upon them. Serm.  
XL.

5. A FIFTH Part of our Care in this Duty must be, that, to avoid Dependency, we run not into Presumption; that we express our Gratitude by our Humility and Obedience, and answer the End of God's great Mercies, which are all designed to make us better. A devout Thankfulness is the Duty we are to exercise, and we must therefore remove all Profaneness and Impiety; we cannot be said to be truly thankful, unless we love our Benefactor; nor can we be said to love our God, unless we keep his Commandments. All other Expressions of Thankfulness and Acknowledgment, without this, are but specious Hypocrisies; this is the true Criterion and Touch-stone, by which a real Gratitude is distinguished from a formal one. Let us then, in the Name of God, who have received Mercies beyond our Deserts or Expectations, endeavour, by Piety and all Christian Perfection, to make ourselves worthy of the Continuance of these Blessings, however unworthy we, or our Fore-fathers, have been of the Reception of them. And let us, of this sinful Nation, consider, that the Goodness

Vol. III. nefs of God leadeth to Repentance, and  
 that we ought to signalize our selves, a-  
 bove others, by a holy Conversation, as  
 God hath distinguished us by miraculous  
 Preservations. Let us all join chearfully  
 in the Thanksgiving of my Text; *Blessed  
 be the Lord, who hath not given us over as  
 a Prey unto their Teeth: Our Soul is  
 escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the  
 Fowlers; the Snare is broken, and we are  
 delivered.*



SERMON





# SERMON XLI.

The Duty of paying Tri-  
bute to *Cesar* consider'd.

MATTHEW xxii. 21.

*Render therefore unto Cesar the  
things which are Cesar's, and un-  
to God the things that are God's.*

**T**HE melancholy Occasion of *Sermon*  
our present assembling is to de- *XLI.*  
precate those Judgments which  
we have reason to fear do yet  
hang over these unhappy Nations, for  
that inhuman Murder, which (as on  
this Day) was committed upon the sacred  
Person of the Lord's anointed; the most  
formal Piece of solemn Barbarity, that  
T was

Vol.III. was ever met with in any History: and

~~~~~ I pray God the Guilt of that precious Blood, which then doubly dyed his royal Purple, may yet be expiated by all that hath been since shed in our foreign Wars, or civil Dissensions! I question not but all who now hear me, because they were not immediate Actors in this Tragedy, will be apt to wash their Hands, and say, *We are innocent of the Blood of this just Person*; not considering, that if we by any other means *have filled up the Iniquity of our Fathers*, it is but just in God, and agreeable to those Methods which he hath laid down, to visit us for their Transgressions, and to impute to the Children, as far as temporal Punishments extend, the Impieties of those that have gone before them. I shall not entertain you with the horrid Circumstances of an Action as notorious as scandalous to this Nation; but shall only observe of the Parties concerned in it, that their Hypocrisy towards God was full as great as their Disloyalty to their lawful Sovereign; and that as their way of rendring unto *Cesar the things which are Cesar's*, was by invading his Prerogative, and violating his Person; so also, their Method of *rendring unto God the Things that are God's*, was by profaning his Temples, and

and interrupting his Worship: we cannot therefore better express our Detestation for those gross Enormities of which they were guilty, than by being duly conversant in the contrary Virtues; and exactly complying with the Advice of our Saviour, that we should with the greatest Ardour and Sincerity, *Render unto Cesar the Things which are Cesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*

In my following Discourse upon which Words, I shall consider them in a two-fold respect:

First, As they relate to the foregoing Verses, and are a strong Inference in that particular Occasion, in which our Saviour made use of them.

Secondly, As they contain an universal Precept, and are generally instructive to all Mankind.

First THEN, I shall consider them, as they relate to the foregoing Verses, and are a strong Inference in that particular Occasion, in which our Saviour made use of them.

THESE Words are the Solution of a pretended Case of Conscience, proposed by the *Jews* to our blessed Saviour, with a Design to intangle him in his Answer: for they being galled and incensed at the Parable, in the beginning of this

Vol.III. Chapter, of a certain King who made a Marriage for his Son, to which the invited Guests refused to come, and were therefore censured as unworthy; and finding themselves visibly concerned in it, they maliciously consult how they may get some Advantage against him; grounding their Intention upon his Freedom of Discourse, and his having no Respect of Persons: they therefore send unto him jointly some *Pharisees* and some *Herodians*, to propound unto him this dangerous and ticklish Question, *Whether it were lawful to pay Tribute unto Cesar, or not?* Now that we may the better understand the Subtilty and Malice of this Question, we must look backwards, and consider, what was the State of *Judea* at that time. We are then to take notice that about sixty Years before the Incarnation of our blessed Saviour, *Hircanus* and *Aristobulus*, the Sons of *Alexander*, of the illustrious Race of the *Maccabees*, falling into contention for the Kingdom of *Judea*, and the younger Brother getting possession of it; *Hircanus*, the elder, applied himself to the *Romans* for Redress; and prevailed upon *Pompey*, who was then near, to march with an Army to his Relief: who thereupon besieging *Jerusalem*, had it soon delivered up to him by the Friends
of

of *Hircanus*; whom he restored to the High-priesthood, and invested him in the Kingdom, he holding it under the Protection of the *Romans*: to this Condition the Partisans of *Hircanus* willingly consented, being induced to it by the Divisions in which their Country was embroiled; and which inclined them to concur with the Proposals of *Pompey*, that the Government should be managed in subjection to the Senate, as *Josephus* informeth us very expressly; but the other Faction, that favoured *Aristobulus*, and was now kept under, remained much dissatisfied at the present Posture of Affairs, looking upon the *Romans* as Usurpers and forcible Possessors; and thus things continued until our Saviour's Coming. Now at this time, some of each of these two Parties, *Pharisees* on the one side, who accused the *Cesarian* Government of Usurpation, and *Herodians* (or Followers of *Herod*) on the other, who acknowledged and adhered to the *Roman* Authority, came jointly unto Christ, to propound to him that invidious Question, *Whether it was lawful to pay Tribute unto Cesar, or not?* Not doubting to intrap him, whatsoever he should answer; either by taking advantage to inflame the *Pharisees* against him,

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Vol. III. who were the most eminent Men amongst the *Jews*, if he should say that Tribute was to be paid; or else by bringing him into Danger with *Herod* and the *Roman* Party, if he should determine that it was not to be paid. Our Saviour looking through the thin Veil of Flattery in the Preamble, and plainly discovering their treacherous Intentions, that they came to insnare him under a pretence of reverencing him; first reproacheth them with their Hypocrisy, and then demandeth to see the Tribute-money: upon this they produce a *Denarius*, or Penny, being an *Attick Drachme*, with *Cesar's* Image and Superscription; which our Saviour having attentively considered, taketh occasion from thence to frame an Answer to their Question, probably upon these or the like Motives: The coining of Money is part of the supream Power or regal Prerogative, incommunicable to any other; and therefore their acknowledging this to be current Coin, supposeth *Cesar* (whose Signature it beareth) to be their lawful Prince; to whom consequently Tribute is due, as the legal Protector of their civil Commerce: Let them therefore look upon the Coin for the solving of their doubt, and let them consider whose Image and Signature that bear-

beareth. But farther, in relation to the Inscription; we find that to be Κἄισαρ Ἀυγῆστος Ἰουδαίας ἐξ ἑλωκήας, and some numeral Letters expressing the Time of its Coinage; *Cesar Augustus, in such a Year, after the taking of Judea*; now this being a Record of the Roman Conquest over that Nation, and of the Right by them acquired upon the Surrender of *Hircanus*; as also an account of the Time since this happened, being about some ninety Years; sufficiently demonstrated that it was unlawful to dispute a Power that had been of so long continuance, and which was at the first so fairly established; and therefore for more fully deciding the Question, let them look also upon the Superscription: and both from the Consideration of that and of the Image, this Conclusion is rationally and naturally inferred, *Render therefore unto Cesar the Things which are Cesar's.* But the *Pharisees* being likely to catch at this, as contrary to their private Sentiments and Opinion, the Holy *Jesus* thought it necessary to take from them all shadow of Complaint, by adding a religious Exhortation to his former politick Decision; as knowing that they, who affected a singular and superficial Devotion, durst not openly cavil at such a

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Vol.III Declaration, wherein the Honour of God was as much consulted, as the just Prerogative of the Prince; and therefore he immediately subjoineth, that they should *render unto God, the Things that are God's.* An Answer so adapted to the Circumstances of Affairs, so proper to extricate himself out of those Difficulties, which the Cunning of his Adversaries had prepared for him; that I wonder not at their Surprise upon so unlooked for a Disappointment, and that when they had heard these Words, *they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.* And thus much may suffice for the Explication of their Meaning, as they relate to the foregoing Verses; and are a strong Inference in that particular Occasion, in which our Saviour made use of them. I now proceed to consider them,

Secondly, As they contain an universal Precept, and are generally instructive to all Mankind.

THE Rules and Instructions, given by our blessed Saviour, were never so particularly adapted to any single Circumstances or Conditions, as not to be applicable to many others; and as the Actions of his Life were universal Examples, so the Words of his Mouth were universal Precepts; both being directed to the same great

great End, the Saving and Improving Mankind in general. What he enjoined the *Jews* then, he equally and impartially commandeth us now; and we, as well as they, are indispensibly required, *to render unto Cesar the Things which are Cesar's, and unto God the Things that are God's.*

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THE Words thus generally taken, in their largest and fullest Acceptation, afford us these two distinct Propositions:

- I. THAT we are most powerfully engaged to respect and obey the lawful Magistrate; or to *render unto Cesar the Things which are Cesar's.*
- II. THAT we are indispensibly obliged to discharge our Duty to our Almighty Creator; or to *render unto God the Things that are God's.*

I. WE are most powerfully engaged to respect and obey the lawful Magistrate; or to *render unto Cesar the Things which are Cesar's*; and this Engagement lieth upon us, under a threefold Qualification; as we are Men, as we are Christians, and as we are Protestants of the Church of *England.*

I. THEN,

Vol.III. I. THEN, we are most powerfully engaged to respect and obey the lawful Magistrate, as we are Men.

MAN is a Creature designed for Society, and by a grand Prerogative, above the rest of the Creation, he only is capable of relishing familiar Intercourse, of enjoying the Pleasures of an amicable Correspondence, and mutual Conversation. This being a Privilege which resulteth immediately from his Reason, and belongeth to him as he is meer Man, I shall endeavour to conduct him by just degrees, with the Assistance only of his natural Abilities, from the Love and Desire of a sociable Commerce, to the Necessity of Obedience to the lawful Magistrate. When he by certain inward Dictates is led on to the Pursuance of that, which is so very agreeable to his Nature; his Reason first adviseth him, not to take up barely with the Satisfaction, but also to improve the Conveniences of Society; which consist in the mutual imparting of such Things, as are superfluous and useless to the Occasions of one, for supplying the Necessities and Exigencies of another; with other Considerations of a parallel Nature: but since it may very frequently happen, that some by natural Subtilty, or acquired Craftiness,

ness, or the unjust Use of bodily Strength, may prejudice or destroy such as are weaker, or more sincere; therefore to obviate this grand Inconvenience, Reason again adviseth, that publick Rules should be unanimously agreed upon, as the Standard and Measure of private Actions, to which all should be indifferently obliged, without any Exception or Reserve. And this may seem to be the Original of human Laws, and publick Constitutions; yet even these being apt to be wrested by single Persons to their own particular Advantage, who being narrowly byass'd by Self-interest, would probably put upon them such Interpretations, as might best suit with their own Convenience, without any respect to the Good of others; therefore to remove a Danger of such fatal Consequence, Reason again informeth us, that since this is occasioned by private Interest, the best and most effectual Remedy must be the constituting some one or more, as the Protectors and Interpreters of those Laws and Constitutions; who being supported and defended by the Publick, should be thereby enabled to support and defend them; and being equally obliged to the whole Community, should be free from Interest and Partiality, and thereby qualified

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Vol. III. lifted for the upright Decision of all such
 ~~~~~ Matters as might be controverted; and  
 ~~~~~ this may rationally be supposed to be the  
 Ground-work and Foundation of all Civil
 Government. Now the Person or Persons thus appointed, must needs be vested
 with a sufficient Authority, and revered with a just Respect and Deference,
 or else the Institution would be to no
 purpose, and so contrary to right Reason,
 which first designed it. Thus I have endeavoured to shew, by what Steps and
 Methods the Maxims of right Reason
 conduct the merely natural Man, from the
 Love of Society, to the Advantages of it,
 to the Means of securing them, to the
 Necessity of Magistrates, and to the Obedience which is payable to them. But
 since the Christian Religion came into
 the World not to contradict but to improve our Reason; since where that endeth,
 Grace beginneth its Progress; therefore if we are obliged to this Duty as we
 are meer Men, we are certainly much more so, upon the account of our most
 holy Profession.

2. THEN, we are most powerfully engaged to respect and obey the lawful Magistrate, as we are Christians.

It is the proper and peculiar Office of Christianity to sublimate and exalt to a
 I higher

higher degree of Perfection, all those Seeds of Virtue and Morality, which it findeth planted in the Hearts of its Professors: and if we will but cast our Eyes backwards, upon the primitive Ages of the Church, we shall find this particular Duty of Obedience and Respect to the lawful Magistrate, shine forth more eminently and conspicuously in them, than can be paralleled by any Examples of former Ages or Professions: though they were persecuted and martyred by their Heathen Governors, yet they never disputed that Authority, which was supported by the Laws and Constitutions of those several Nations over which they were dispersed, having perfectly learned that Lesson of Submission, *to obey not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake*; for had not Principles of this Nature secured their Oppressors, it had been as likely and feasible for a resolute Christian, whose Courage was sufficiently demonstrated in his Sufferings, to have killed a *Nero*, or a *Dioclesian*; as it was in these latter Times for *Gerard* to pistol the Prince of *Orange*, or for *Ravilliac* to stab the King of *France*. But Christianity teacheth us Lessons of another Nature; this telleth us that we must *render to all their due, Tribute to whom Tribute, Custom to whom Custom*; that
every

Vol.III. every Soul must be subject to the higher Powers ; that we must not revile the Ruler of our People ; but must join honouring our Prince, with fearing our God. These are the Precepts of Christianity in general, and they have a greater Force in regard of us, because,

3. WE are most powerfully engaged to respect and obey the lawful Magistrate as we are Protestants of the Church of *England*. We have seen the Behaviour of the Primitive Christians, and how firmly they were settled in their Principles of Loyalty ; but when the Enemy began to sow his Tares amongst the Wheat, and Errors crept into the Church of God, as the Purity of the Gospel was gradually corrupted, so Obedience to the lawful Magistrate was proportionably impaired. It was thought below an universal Guide, to admit of any earthly Superior ; and though the Infancy of Christianity was accompanied with a Submission becoming its tender Years ; yet when it was grown to a riper Age, its infallible Guardian then thought fit to put on a more manly Resolution ; and no longer to submit to any Ordinance of Man, no, not *for the Lord's sake*. But when our pious and blessed Reformers purged away the corrupt Opinions that were introduced into the

the Church, and regulated Religion by the antient Standard, when thus *they rendered unto God the Things that were God's*; they forgot not at the same Time to render unto Cesar the Things which were Cesar's: and it hath ever since been the Glory of our Church, to have preferred nothing before our Loyalty to our Prince, except our Religion and our God. This is a Tenet so well known even to our Adversaries, that they never attempted to ruin the State, but by the Destruction of the Church. The unhappy Experience of this Day hath sufficiently confirmed this Assertion, since it calleth to our Remembrance those times of Confusion, in which Monarchy was assassinated through the Sides of the Hierarchy; and trampling upon the Mitre was made a Step to treading upon the Crown; when the Cry of *no Bishops* was the Forerunner of *no King*; and the Prince and the Primate were successively sacrificed. For as our Religion is the only one established by the Government, though others may be allowed of and tolerated by it; so all other Persuasions may be said to comply with it, whilst those of the Church of *England* strengthen and uphold them. If then we go on to discharge this Obligation, shewing our selves good Christians, and obedient Subjects,

Vol. III. Subjects, God will not fail to prosper and protect us, but will assist our King with Grace and Wisdom, to go in and out before so great a People.

BUT however intent we are or ought to be upon the Performance of this great Duty, yet let us not forget one that is still much greater; but let us always be sure to remember, that whilst we obey the Image and Substitute, we must not disobey the Substance and Superior; which leadeth me to consider,

II. THAT we are indispenfibly obliged to discharge our Duty to our Almighty Creator; or to *render unto God the Things that are God's.*

FAR be it from me, or any Minister, or Member of the Church of *England*, to attempt to set nice or narrow Bounds to the Obedience payable to our lawful Prince; but farther be it from me or any Christian, to set any Limits at all to the Duty payable to our God: as the Obligations we have to him are prior and superior to any others whatsoever; so must our Deference and Obedience be enlarged towards him in an answerable Proportion: and if ever it should so happen (which God of his infinite Mercy prevent) that these two grand Engagements

ments should clash with each other; then that positive Command must certainly take place, of serving God rather than Man: for Apostacy is the highest degree of Disloyalty; nor will he ever be true to his Prince, who can be false to his God; since weaker Ties are more easily violated than such as are more strong and binding. If then we will but consider, that it was God who drew us forth at first from the dark Womb of Nothing, and elevated us into the Rank of rational Beings; if we will but remember, that it was the same God, who redeemed us from Destruction when we were worse than nothing, and advanced us to the Privileges of his Favourites and his Sons; if we will but reflect, that to him we owe our present Well-being in this World, and our hopes of eternal Happiness in the World which is to come; we cannot sure refuse to give unto him the Honour due unto his Name, and to worship the Lord with holy Worship: What Right can be greater than that of a Creator? What Purchase more just than that of a Redeemer? What Interest more considerable than that of a Preserver? Or what Bounty more engaging than that of an infinite Rewarder? Can any thing

U that

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XLI.

Vol.III. that this World can confer, stand in competition with such vast Obligations? and consequently ought any thing to shock our Resolution, of *rendering unto God the Things that are God's*? The greatest Enemies of this necessary Duty, are these two strong and violent Passions, our Hopes and our Fears; and therefore if we design to comply with it exactly, we must arm our selves against them with an unshaken Constancy. As to the former of these, our Hopes whenever our sinful or carnal Hopes, endeavour to seduce us from the Service of God, by the glittering Prospect of worldly Advantages; if they court us with the inviting Shews of Honour and Preferment, and slyly whisper into our Ears, that the Favour of a King is as Dew upon the Grass, which maketh it flourish agreeably, and increase successfully; yet if that it self must be purchased by offending against our God, let us reflect upon the other side, how far short all this is of the Glory which shall be one Day revealed to such as do well; that at the left Hand of the Lord there are Riches and Honours, and at his right Hand Pleasures for evermore. As to the latter of these, our Fears, whenever any Temptation worketh

worketh upon the viler and more base Affections of the Mind, by the increasing and misapplying of our Fears; if they assault the Weakness of the Flesh, by the Dread and Apprehension of temporal Inconveniences; if they suggest unto us, that the Wrath of a King is as the Roaring of a Lion, and he that provoketh him to Anger, sinneth against his own Soul; yet if this Danger it self must be incurred by performing that Duty which we owe unto our God, let us on the other side reflect, that the Wrath of God is a consuming Fire, and ask our selves, whether we can dwell with everlasting Burnings? Let us remember, that we must not *fear them which can kill the Body, and are not able to kill the Soul; but rather ought to fear him, who can destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*: thus if we arm our selves against the differing Temptations, of flattering Hopes and threatening Fears, we may be sure to *render unto God the Things that are God's, as well as unto Cesar the Things which are Cesar's*.

GIVE me leave, instead of an Application, briefly to sum up what hath been already said, and so I shall conclude.

OUR Saviour, you see, commandeth Tribute to be paid, and all Things which

Vol.III. are due, to be rendered unto *Cesar*, although a Heathen and a Tyrant ; much more certainly doeth this Engagement lie upon us to a Christian Prince, who is our gracious Sovereign, and our munificent Benefactor. You have seen that the Injunction is universal, not limited to the *Jews* only, but directed to all the Sons of *Adam* ; that we are obliged to comply with it by the Laws of Nature, as we are Men ; by the Rules of the Gospel, as we are Christians ; and by the Purity of our particular Profession, as we are Members of the Church of *England* : so that we must forfeit our Humanity, our high Calling in Christ Jesus, and our Partnership in the Communion of our Church, if we violate our Respect, or forfeit our Obedience to his sacred Majesty, who beareth the divine Image doubly stamped upon him, both as he is Man, and as he is King ; and is not only the Ruler of our People, but the Head of our Church, and Defender of our Faith : Let us not therefore by slighting such a Blessing, provoke God to renew unto us that lamentable Time, when there was no King in *Israel*, but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes. But as the Canons of our Church oblige us to preach

preach up Loyalty and Obedience to our Prince, as often as a fuitable Occasion shall call for it, and sure none can be more fuitable than the present one ; so are we also enjoyned by them, to enforce practical Piety, and our Duty towards God, at all Times and upon all Occasions ; and therefore you have been shewn that no temporal Consideration ought to be put in the Balance with him by *whom Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice*, and compared to whom all the Children of Men collectively taken, the greatest Potentates not excluded, are *deceitful upon the Weight, they are altogether lighter than Vanity it self.*

LET us not then by neglecting this Duty, expose our selves to the sad Condition of those, who are said to be without God in this World ; and who, consequently, can have no Title or Pretence to the Enjoyment of him in that World which is to come.

AND now if we take care to discharge this double Duty of true Loyalty to our Prince, and Obedience to our God, we may hope to avoid the Confusions which this Day introduced amongst us, and justly expect to enjoy the joint Blessings of the

Vol.III. one's Administration, and of the other's
 ~~~~~ Protection.

I SHALL close up all with the Wise Man's Advice; *My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change; for their Calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knoweth the Ruin of them both?*



SERMON



# SERMON XLII.

The Duty of praying for the  
King and Royal Family.

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PSAL. lxxii. 1.

*Give the King thy Judgments, O God;  
and thy Righteousness unto the King's  
Son.*

**S**O great is the Harmony between the Head and Members, in the Body Politick, as well as Natural, that they have a mutual Sensation, or Fellow-feeling, of each others Sufferings and Enjoyments: And from hence there a-  
Serm.  
XLII.

Vol.III. riseth an invincible Necessity, that they  
 ~~~~~ should endeavour to promote one another's Advantage, since it is so inseparably interwoven with their own. For as Kings can never be compleatly easy, unless their Subjects are in a State of Prosperity and Tranquillity, so neither can any People be thoroughly happy, except their Sovereign be in a glorious and flourishing Condition. And therefore St. Paul giveth us very good Advice, when he *exhorteth us to offer up Supplications and Prayers for Kings, and for all that are in Authority; that under them we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty.* Now as nothing can give greater Lustre to a Crown, than an equal and regular Distribution of Justice, so nothing can more fitly be the Subject of our Prayers, especially upon this Day of Joy and Solemnity, than *that God would give the King his Judgments:* And since he is blessed with an Heir to succeed him, who may perpetuate to these Nations their present Enjoyments, we must join to our former Prayer this additional Petition, *That he would also give his Righteousness unto the King's Son.*

BEFORE I proceed farther, give me Leave to observe the considerable Distinction between the two Expressions
 rela-

relating to the King, and to the King's Sermon. Son. The former of them, *דְּבָרִים* or *Judgments*, implieth the pronouncing of Sentence in a judiciary Manner, and the Execution of Justice in Consequence thereof; which is proper and peculiar to the supreme Magistrate, or to those who are empowered by him to represent his Person: The latter of them, *יְרֵכָה* or *Righteousness*, signifieth such a constant and habitual Regard to Equity, and to the Exercise and Practice of all moral Virtues, as is consistent indeed with a more private Station, but qualifyeth and prepareth one for the highest: The one is here applied to him that sitteth upon the Throne; the other, to him that standeth next to it.

HAVING briefly cleared up the Sense of these two Expressions, and shewn the great Difference that there is between them, notwithstanding their seeming Affinity to each other, it will justify my dividing the Text into two Parts, by observing how much it is our Duty, and our Interest, to offer up our Prayers to Almighty God.

I. *THAT* he would give the King his *Judgments*. And,

II.

II. *THAT he would give his Righteousness unto the King's Son.*

I. THEN, it is our Duty, and our Interest, to pray *that God would give the King his Judgments*: That he would continually inspire his Royal Breast with such noble Sentiments of Uprightness and Equity, as may dispose and enable him to administer Justice with the greatest Rectitude and Impartiality. This, I say, is both our Duty, in respect of our King; and also, our Interest, in relation to our selves.

I. THEN, it is our Duty, in respect of our King; whose Happiness we are all commanded to pray for, as you have been taught in the Exhortation quoted from *St. Paul*; and yet who can never be truly happy, unless *God giveth his Judgments unto him*. For this is the indispensable Qualification, that communicateth true Greatness to a King; that maketh him formidable to his Enemies, and delightful to his Subjects, feared Abroad, and beloved at Home. This resembleth him to God, whose Vice-gerent he is, by whom *Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice*; and sheweth, that as he deriveth his Power from him, so he will regulate the Exercise of it by his Example.

Such a Prince as this is the most valuable Gift of God, and seemeth to revive again the ancient Theocracy ; when God immediately presided over the *Jews*, and yet led them by the Conduct of a *Moses*, or a *Joshua*. How universal an Esteem must he monopolize in this World, and how great a Weight of Glory must he treasure up in another ; who acteth after the Model of which God is the Pattern, and continually transcribeth so divine an Original ! Who maketh the Law of God the Rule of his Proceedings, and his Judgments the Standard of his whole Administration ! With how erect a Countenance may he appear at that only Bar to which Monarchs are accountable, who hath discharged his great Office in so commendable a Manner, to the Glory of that God, whose Representative he was ! And, by duly improving the great Talent with which he was intrusted, shall keep up his Distinction in another World ; and be advanced, even there, to sit upon a Throne, and pass an unerring Judgment upon others ! If therefore we wish to promote his Happiness, it is our Duty to pray, *that God would give the King his Judgments* ; which are the Means to procure to him Love and Honour here, and to crown

Vol. III. crown him with a glorious Immortality hereafter. But as this is our Duty, in respect of our King; so it is also,

2. OUR Interest, in relation to our selves. Interest is a Motive that generally influenceth us, when all others fail, and prove ineffectual; and the inbred Principle of Self-love, with which all Mankind are more or less affected, inclineth us to close with any Methods, which may promote our Happiness or Advantage; but nothing can more substantially contribute to that End, than the accepting and granting our Petition, *That God would give the King his Judgments.* For how important are the Consequences of such a National Blessing, and how diffusive are the Benefits that arise from thence; when the King is a Father to his whole People, and a Guardian-Angel to all his Subjects! Almost the entire Psalm, of which my Text is Part, is taken up with a Description of their signal Felicity, who are governed by a King, to whom *God giveth his Judgments.* And I cannot lay before you a better Prospect of it, than by copying after so elegant and inspired a Writer. *He shall judge, saith he, the Poor of the People, he shall save the Children of the Needy, and break in Pieces the Oppressor:* The meanest of his

his Subjects shall be entitled to his Protection, no Bribes, or respect of Persons, shall byass him against them; he shall be a Father to the Fatherless, and a Husband to the Widow, a Comforter and Reliever of them under all their Necessities; and shall make use of the Sword, which he doeth not bear in vain, only against those who disturb the Publick Quiet, and pursue the hateful Courses of Oppression and Injustice: *He shall come down as Rain upon the mowen Grass, as Showers that water the Earth:* His Influence shall be as comfortable and beneficial, as that of the Clouds of Heaven, *which drop down Fatness;* as refreshing as the Dew, and as improving as the Rain, which causeth the After-grass to spring up and prosper. *In his Days shall the Righteous flourish, and abundance of Peace so long as the Moon endureth:* Wickedness and Impiety shall be put out of Countenance, whilst *the King, that sitteth in the Throne of Judgment, shall scatter away all Evil with his Eye.* Probity and Integrity shall be the chief Qualifications, which shall recommend to the Royal Favour and Acceptance; and as it was customary amongst the ancient *Romans*, the only Way to the Temple of Honour shall be through that of Virtue; Plenty
and

Vol. III: and Prosperity shall be their constant
 ~~~~~ Companions; *Peace shall be within their  
 Walls, and Plenteousness within their Pa-  
 laces.* Can any thing afford us a more  
 lively Draught of the flourishing Condi-  
 tion of that Nation, which is under the  
 Dominion of such a Sovereign, than this  
 Prophecy, which was partly fulfilled in  
 the Time of *David*, but more compleat-  
 ly in that of *Solomon*, the Son and Suc-  
 cessor of the King then reigning; for  
 whose sake more especially this Psalm  
 was composed, and to whom, by the  
*Hebrew* Title, it is addressed and dedi-  
 cated! What just Reason then have all  
 Subjects to pray earnestly, *That God*  
*would give the King his Judgments*, since  
 thereby he becometh the precious Vehi-  
 cle of conveying to them Advantages  
 so weighty and so numerous! If Peace,  
 and Plenty, and Prosperity, be Things  
 valuable; if the undisturbed Possession  
 of our just Rights be worth wishing for;  
 if Freedom from Violence and Oppression,  
 the suppressing of Vice and Encourage-  
 ment of Virtue, be Matters that appear  
 to us of Moment and Importance, then  
 ought we all, upon the Account of our  
 true Interest, which we see is so remark-  
 ably concerned in this Case, to beg Al-  
 mighty God, that *he would give the King*  
*Wis-*



*Wisdom, to go in and out before so great a People*; and both our Duty and our Interest oblige us to cry out, *Give the King thy Judgments, O God.* And, indeed, when we reflect upon our present Circumstances, and the secure Posture of our Publick Affairs, notwithstanding the great Losses of private Families; which is too much owing to the immoderate Pursuit, and unaccountable Desire, of such excessive Gains, as justly drew upon them the Judgment of a Disappointment; when we consider that our Holy Religion is secured, and the free Exercise of it supported and encouraged, in spite of the open Insults of Deists and Free-Thinkers, and the inexcusable Luke-warmness of its Possessors; when we feel no Invasions upon Liberty and Property, no Infringements of those valuable Privileges of an *Englishman*; but the Laws, which are our Fences maintained in full Vigour, and the Streams of Justice flowing within their proper Channels; we may well conclude, that *God hath given our King his Judgments*, because we are sensible of the Effects of so gracious a Concession.

AND, in order to continue and perpetuate these Blessings, we shall find it  
again

Vol. III. again our Duty, and our Interest, to pray  
 farther,

II. *THAT God would give his Righteousness unto the King's Son.* And,

i. IT is our Duty to offer up our Prayers, that *God would give his Righteousness unto the King's Son*, in respect of the great Advantages which may redound to him. For, by these Means, he will conciliate an universal Esteem, and gain the Love and Affections of all that are about him. The most vicious of Men cannot avoid paying an inward Respect, at least, to the Good and Virtuous; Piety commandeth and extorteth a Reverence, even from those that are least acquainted with it; and preserveth the true Value of its intrinsick Worth, however mean its Practitioners may be, in spite of all such as are unaffected by it! But when it flourisheth in Persons of so elevated a Rank, it shedeth abroad its Influence with greater Vigour, and exacteth a larger Share of Admiration and Respect: It provoketh others to a virtuous Emulation, and leadeth them on insensibly from one Perfection to another. How strong then must be the Efficacy of such a noble President! And how

how many of his Inferiors may a Prince turn to Righteousness, by the Force and Energy of so prevailing an Example! How will he bespeak the Veneration of his future Subjects, by giving them an Idea of the Happiness they are likely to enjoy under him! And how brightly must true Goodness shine in his high Quality, like a Jewel set to Advantage in the richest Metal! But, above all, how will this recommend him to his Maker, who delighteth to honour them that honour him! How will he guide him in his Ways, and direct him in his Goings; till he leadeth him honourably and peaceably to a Temporal Crown here, and conducteth him to an eternal one hereafter! Since then it is our Duty to pray for his Prosperity, what Prayer can we offer up that may more conduce to his Happiness, than that *God would give his Righteousness to the King's Son?* That thereby he would secure to him a large Portion of Respect at present, and a glorious Reversion afterwards of immarcescible Glory. But,

2. IT is also our Interest to pray, that *God would give his Righteousness to the King's Son*; because, by those Means, the Blessings we now enjoy, seem to be entailed upon us and our Posterity.



Vol. III. Though Kings have been called *Gods*, yet they must die like Men; and did we hold the Advantages, of which I have been treating, only by the bare Tenure of a single Life; such a Consideration would make the Fear of losing, in a great Measure, balance the Pleasure of possessing: But when they are to be transmitted to us and to our Children, not only in the Person of the immediate Heir, but in a numerous Progeny of hopeful Princes; how heartily ought we all, in View of such great Benefits, to pray, *That God would give his Righteousness unto the King's Son!* Who may thereby be fitly qualified to make up to us the great Loss we must one Day sustain; and to set such a Pattern to his illustrious Offspring, as may make them prove Blessings to succeeding Generations. And here it would be unpardonable to omit taking due Notice of that excellent Princess, from whom these growing Advantages are derived; since both our Duty and our Interest indispensibly oblige us to offer up our Petitions to the Throne of Grace, that God would continue to give his Righteousness to her also.

I CANNOT then but congratulate the People of these Nations upon the pleasing Expectations they may justly conceive, of  
having

having their present Happiness confirmed and prolonged, whenever God shall, in his providential Dispensation, advance them to the Throne of these Kingdoms. Then that engaging Affability and Condescension, which gaineth the Hearts of all that have the Happiness to approach them, and is an infallible Evidence of the truest Grandeur, though under the plain Dress of Meekness and Humility; then that extensive Charity and Liberality, which maketh them universally beneficial where-ever they come, and commandeth the Respect and Affections of all Men: Then these, and such other Virtues, as are the proper Ornaments of so exalted a Station, will have a larger Sphere of Activity to display themselves in, and will appear more eminent and conspicuous; and whereas they now seem only to be drawn in Miniature, they will then be represented in full Length, and set off with the brightest and most lively Colouring. How ought we all then to rejoice at so pleasing a Prospect, and to anticipate the Joy of so delightful a Scene! We especially who enjoy their more immediate Influence, and have sensibly experienced their Bounty and Benignity. Let then all Parties and Factions be laid aside, since we hope to share mutually in such

con-

Vol. III. considerable Benefits; let all Distinctions be swallowed up in Unity and Love; that we may be worthy of the Mercies which we possess and look for. And the more effectually to secure the Peace of our *Israel*, let us unanimously join in this necessary Petition, *Give the King thy Judgments, O God, and thy Righteousness to the King's Son.*



**F I N I S.**





